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BEYOND THE MEXICAN SIERRAS

(Page 214)

"We stand on the throne of the gods, with their kingdom at our feet"



BEYOND THE MEXICAN SIERRAS

BY

DILLON WALLACE

AUTHOR OF "THE LONG LABRADOR TRAIL,"
"UNGAVA BOB," ETC.

*WITH 75 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY
THE AUTHOR, AND A MAP*



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NORWOOD • MASS • U • S • A

THIS BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO
REVEREND THERON BRITTAINE
MY BOYHOOD PASTOR AND
LIFELONG FRIEND

*White crosses in the mountain pass,
Mules gay with tassels, the loud din
Of muleteers, the tethered ass
That crops the dusty wayside grass,
And cavaliers with spurs of brass
Alighting at the inn.*

*Ah yes, the hills are white with snow,
And cold with blasts that bite and freeze;
But in the happy vale below
The orange and pomegranate grow,
And wafts of air toss to and fro
The blossoming almond-trees.*

LONGFELLOW'S "Castles in Spain."

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D. W.

NEW YORK,

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INTRODUCTION

“O F all that extensive empire which once acknowledged the authority of Spain in the New World, no portion, for interest and importance, can be compared with Mexico—and this equally whether we consider the variety of its soil and climate; the inexhaustible stores of its mineral wealth; its scenery, grand and picturesque beyond example; the character of its ancient inhabitants, not only far surpassing in intelligence that of the other North American races, but reminding us, by their monuments, of the primitive civilizations of Egypt and Hindustan; or, lastly, the peculiar circumstances of the Conquest, adventurous and romantic as any legend devised by Norman or Italian bard of chivalry.”

These are Prescott’s words of introduction to that fascinating classic, “The Conquest of Mexico.” Inaccurate as he may have been in his estimate of the extent and magnificence of the Aztec Empire, Prescott made no exaggeration in his measure of the country itself. Indeed, I am tempted to enlarge his comparison, and assert that in all the two continents of the Western Hemisphere there is no area of equal extent that can approach Mexico in wealth of natural resources, variety of climate, grandeur of scenery, prehistoric ruins, and romantic history.

How many of us who live north of the Rio Grande know that within the borders of our neighbor republic

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to the south there is embraced a territory larger than that of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, The Netherlands, Belgium, and Switzerland combined? That Mexico is one-quarter as large as the United States? That she has a coast line of six thousand miles? That within her borders practically every product of the soil of the tropical and temperate zones can be grown to perfection? That she has vast primordial forests and incalculable, inexhaustible wealth of minerals? That here are the remains of cities that were ancient ruins, and whose buildings and origin had been lost in the dust of dead and mouldering centuries, before the foundations of Rome were laid?

Cut in twain by the Tropic of Cancer, lying partially in the torrid and partially in the north temperate zone, we are wont to class Mexico as an equatorial country, and ascribe to her generally the unhealthful climatic conditions to which such lands are subject. While this is true to a greater or less extent of the States in the extreme south, and of a lowland belt that lines both the Atlantic and Pacific seabards, it is an entirely erroneous impression as applied to Mexico as a whole. Her great central plateau lies at an average altitude of more than six thousand feet above the sea, with an even and salubrious climate that approaches the ideal.

That Mexico has been so long misunderstood is due largely, if not wholly, to the unfortunate methods of her early colonization and the heritage of bad laws and bad government that her Spanish conquerors left behind them. The Spaniards were never colonizers in the true sense of the word. They neglected agricultural possibilities in their search for gold and

a fabled fountain of perpetual youth, and lost sight of the real wealth inherent in the countries they conquered. When the English planted their colonies in New England their sole attention was turned to agricultural pursuits. With untiring energy they cleared the rugged hills of forest and rock, and transformed the wilderness into fertile farms that were the basis of the New World's wealth. When Brigham Young led his little band into Salt Lake Valley, and planted his settlements amidst sage-brush and sand in the Great American Desert, he said to his followers: "Leave the hunt for gold to others. Bring down the waters from the mountains, irrigate and make these wastes fertile. Raise grain and cattle, sell your product to the miners, and soon you will possess all the gold they gather in the hills." It was strict observance of this sage advice of the far-seeing prophet that turned the barren sands of the desert valley into one of the richest garden spots upon the continent, and built into the Union the great State of Utah. But Spain in her insatiable thirst for gold was blinded to the possibilities held out to her by the fertile lands of her tropical and sub-tropical possessions, and these rich lands with all they held of wealth and power were left untamed and uncultivated.

Another grave error in Spanish colonization was the Spaniards' failure to take their women with them. Without women no colonization can be successful or permanent. This our English forbears in their wisdom foresaw, and no English colony was planted in the New World without its quota of women. The Spaniards consorted with Indian women, and the resulting offspring was Indian, not Spanish; for in

the mixture of races it is the mother's blood that predominates, and it is from the mother who rears the offspring in the land of her nativity, not from the alien father, engaged in his own selfish pursuits, that children inherit their instincts, or at least receive their training. Therefore it came about that in time the conquered vanquished the conqueror, and more than three-fifths of the population of Mexico to-day is Indian.

Had Spain followed the English method of settling and developing her American possessions, it is safe to say that history would not have recorded her ignominious fall from power, and the United States would never have wrested from Mexico that vast empire beyond the Rockies.

During the three centuries of Spanish occupation, the mass of native inhabitants of Mexico, reduced to slavery and serfdom, bowed under the lash of the *hidalgo* and cowed by the sword of a cruel and inhuman soldiery, lost their initiative and self-reliance. They were denied freedom of thought as well as of action. Under the pain of death they were forced to relinquish their old ideals of morality and religion, and accept instead bigotry, sensualism, and superstition.

Their ancient temples, of no mean architecture, their artistic handiwork, their laws and government, demonstrate that these people were not lacking in genius. The Abbé Clavigero declared that their mental qualities were not in the least inferior to those of the Europeans, and that with proper educational opportunities and training they would rival the first in Europe in science, philosophy, and the arts. But what progress can be made by any people existing in

poverty above which they are not permitted to rise, bound to servitude, and hounded by oppression? At last Spain, through her selfish methods of government, her failure to colonize and develop, and her profligacy, was banished from the land, and the people came into their own. Smothered, but not dead, the spirit of liberty asserted itself, the slaves flew to arms, and freedom was won.

For more than sixty years after gaining her independence, Mexico, like all of the Spanish-American countries, was subjected to an almost incessant upheaval of civil war and change of government. She was the prey of adventurous politicians and ambitious soldiers who instituted revolutions with or without cause, but generally with no other object in view than personal aggrandizement and pecuniary profit. This was the period of adjustment. It takes long to raise a people from the condition of ignorant slaves to that of enlightened freemen. The traditions of three hundred years of oppression and subjection to stringent military rule cannot be overcome in a generation. One form of government followed another in quick succession, each rising or falling according to the strength of the militant faction which supported it. Regents, emperors, presidents, and dictators came and went, until at length a Moses was raised in Porfirio Diaz to lead his people out of the wilderness of intrigue and war to the portals of peace and material prosperity.

We are all familiar with the history of the French invasion, the banishment of President Benito Juarez from Mexico City, and the attempt to establish in Mexico an hereditary monarchy with the unfortunate

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Maximilian on the throne as emperor. This was during the period of the Civil War in the United States. It was not until that struggle had ended and peace was declared, that the United States finally found itself in position to defend the Monroe Doctrine and incidentally to free Mexico. With a hundred thousand veterans held in readiness to be thrown across the Mexican frontier against the French invaders, France was notified by the United States that continued or further interference on her part in the affairs of this continent would not be tolerated. The French army was promptly and discreetly withdrawn, the republican army of Mexico overthrew the Empire, captured and shot Maximilian, the Emperor, and established a new republic.

After the fall of the Empire the long-banished President, Benito Juarez, returned to the capital and resumed control of the government. In 1872 he died and was succeeded by Lerdo de Tejada. During Juarez's term of office incipient fighting between factions was almost constantly in progress throughout the country. After Lerdo de Tejada assumed the Presidency the smouldering ashes of discontent broke out into the flame of war, and in 1876 the insurgent army, led by General Porfirio Diaz, obtained a sweeping victory over the regulars and triumphantly took possession of Mexico City. Lerdo de Tejada fled to the United States and Diaz was proclaimed President.

Diaz, with the exception of a few months' intermission, when he was relieved by General Juan N. Mendez, served until 1880, when he was succeeded by General Manuel Gonzalez. In 1884 the populace again called for Diaz, who was looked upon as liberator,

and he was overwhelmingly reëlected, and returned to the Presidency, to lead his country out of its meshes of revolution, and weld it into a solid whole.

No imaginative writer has ever created for his hero a more romantic life of stirring adventure than has fallen to the lot of Porfirio Diaz. When he was but three years of age his father died, and in the midst of poverty the boy grew to manhood. His mother desired that he should enter the priesthood, and he began his studies with that in view. But he was not designed for a priest. The blood of battle was in his veins, and at an early age he threw himself with all the impetuosity of his Indian ancestors into the revolutionary struggles of his country. No one can doubt his patriotic motives. He had a keen sense of right and wrong, and the moral and physical courage to espouse the side that he believed to be in the right, irrespective of its weakness or power. He rose to prominence during the struggle against the French. Many times he was captured but always succeeded in making miraculous and thrilling escapes. More than once he was condemned to death. With scorn he refused bribes that would have made him rich but a traitor to his conscience and his country. At last he conquered. Right always conquers in the end. Porfirio Diaz is to-day perhaps the most remarkable man in the world, and a man whom all the world honors and respects.

When Diaz came to the Presidency of Mexico in 1876 the country was infested with bandits. No man's life was safe in the rural districts. Every stranger was watched with a view to robbery, and the haciendas were constantly subject to attack by armed brigands.

The treasury was empty and the country was bankrupt. War had laid waste the land; and the people, so long accustomed to strife, were turned from peaceful living.

To put the new government upon a stable and firm foundation was no easy task. Ambitious politicians who had formed the habit of revolution had to be watched, and subdued with a firm hand. Laws were passed abolishing the death penalty for political offences, but it is an open secret that unwholesome aspirants to power mysteriously disappeared and were heard of no more. Diaz, President in name, became Dictator in fact. One-man power was perhaps the only way to secure peace and material advancement in a land with so emotional a population, made up of an incongruous mixture of Indian and Spanish blood, with the former's instinct for fighting and the latter's love for show and power, and both with quick and fiery tempers. Such a population could not be depended upon to at once appreciate true republicanism. It is not in the nature of such people to relinquish individual aspirations without a struggle and become at once quiet citizens of a republic. It is no easy undertaking to overcome traditions of revolutionary strife in any land where the strife has lasted through generations.

Diaz began with a thorough reorganization and distribution of the army. The *rurales* (the famous and efficient mounted police force) relentlessly hunted the bandits to their retreats, with the result that travel is as safe in Mexico to-day as in the United States, save perhaps in a few outlying and isolated districts. Revolutionary uprisings were promptly quelled, and

the people turned to peaceful pursuits and the development of their country.

Then came the process of forming and passing liberal laws for the protection of property and the attraction of foreign capital. Mexico was poor, and the Government realized that no great advancement could be made in her material prosperity without foreign aid. The railroad is the great civilizer of the present day. Until it comes little can be hoped for in national upbuilding, and here was driven the entering wedge.

Two or three minor roads were in operation when Diaz began his first administration. A British company undertook the construction of a line from Vera Cruz to the capital in 1857, but the vicissitudes of war delayed its completion until 1873; and in the West, in the early seventies, an insignificant railroad, forty-five miles in length, was built between Culiacan, the capital of the State of Sinaloa, and its seaport, Altata.

But the first real beginning in Mexican railroad enterprises took place on February 25, 1880, when the State of Massachusetts granted a charter to the "Mexican Central Railroad Company, Limited." This company was organized by a group of United States capitalists for the purpose of connecting Mexico City with the United States, and opening to development the wide area of plateau that intervened. With the far-sighted, broad-minded policy that has characterized the administration of President Diaz, the most liberal concessions and fullest encouragement were given the new enterprise. In addition to extensive land grants and an average subsidy of about \$15,000

per mile, it was agreed that all material necessary for the construction and operation of the railroad should be admitted free of duty for a period of fifteen years, and for fifty years after its completion the line should be free from taxation.

To-day the Mexican Central Railroad owns a total of 3,426 miles of line, and the "National Lines," composed of the National, International, and Interoceanic Railroads, 3,500 miles, to say nothing of two new trunk lines, the Kansas City, Mexico, and Orient Railroad, and the new Pacific Coast Line, the latter when completed to connect the Southern Pacific Railroad in the United States with Mexico City, and a dozen or so smaller railroads in the East and South, giving Mexico in all nearly eighteen thousand miles of railway.

The Mexican Government a few years ago secured a controlling interest in the National Lines, and within the last three years of the Central Lines, resulting in a recent merger of the two systems. The management, however, is still, and doubtless will remain, in the hands of Americans.

The liberal laws as to railroads have been extended in other directions. Foreigners can now own real estate as freely in Mexico as in the least restricted of our States.

Since Mexico gained her independence from Spain, it has been her effort to attract immigration. The "Prosperidad General" passed in 1827 was designed to give impetus to this, but failed in its object. Other efforts were made in 1846, again in 1868 and in 1877, but without success. These failures to attract immigrants may be assigned to various reasons. During the half-century between 1827 and 1877, when the

country was almost continually in the throes of revolution or incipient uprisings, settlers had no guarantee that they would be protected from pillage. Brigandage was rife and prospective settlers in agricultural districts had no assurance of security from raids of bandit bands. Markets for produce were limited. Railroads had not yet opened up any considerable sections of the country, and transportation of goods and passengers could be accomplished only on mule or horseback. These obstacles in themselves were sufficient to deter the ordinary immigrant.

In 1883 a new immigration law was passed and a fresh effort made to attract foreign settlers. This enactment guaranteed exemption from military service and provided for the admission duty free of agricultural tools, implements, and machinery, animals for breeding purposes, household furniture, and articles for consumption not manufactured or produced in the country. It further relieved the settler from all except municipal taxes. But still no satisfactory influx of immigrants took place, or has taken place to the present day.

This lack of response I believe may be traced to several underlying conditions. In its effort to colonize undeveloped sections of its territory every nation must look for settlers amongst people of moderate means — those who wish to acquire homes for themselves, and laborers seeking profitable employment. The wealthy investor is not the man that builds up a country, but is only a minor factor to that end, and follows the homeseeker.

Mexico has failed to see this. Her public lands have never been surveyed into sections and quarter-sec-

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tions, available at small initial cost, but have been offered in immense tracts embracing thousands of acres, the acquirement of which has been quite out of reach of the poor man. She has depended upon capitalists, purchasing large estates, to survey their purchases at their own expense, and at their own expense lure colonists to settle upon them. This capitalists have not done. They have been content to develop with native labor only sufficient acreage to carry running expenses and pay a small percentage on the capital invested, leaving the greater portion of their haciendas wild and unreclaimed wilderness. Therefore Mexico's fertile soil has lain idle, while the homeseeker has been populating our own unsettled West and building Canada into a great and powerful nation. It is true, a few isolated colonies have been formed, notably those of the Mormons and Boers, but they are comparatively small and insignificant.

Another reason for the failure of Mexico to attract immigration is the general misconception of her climate. The average American and European believes Mexico to be a hot and humid equatorial land, reeking in fever and disease, and nothing has been done by the Government in the way of judicious advertising to disabuse the world of this belief. Mexicans themselves know that the larger portion of their country has a climate corresponding to that of Southern France and Italy, and they have taken it for granted that all the earth knew it too.

The Pacific State of Sinaloa is about to try the experiment of introducing American colonization methods. The late enlightened Governor of that State a few years ago granted an American corporation a con-

cession to survey the agricultural lands of Sinaloa, giving a certain proportion of the lands surveyed as compensation for the work. The survey is now practically completed, and the American company, with title to considerably more than two millions of acres, has already begun the installation of irrigation plants, and proposes to offer its holdings, in small ranches, to prospective settlers from the United States. The officers of this company have developed sections of the fruit-growing country of Southern California, and are men of experience. I can see no reason why their undertaking should not meet with entire success.

Sinaloa has a deeper, richer soil than Southern California, it has a wider range of crop possibilities, there is an abundance of water, for eight months of the year the climate is ideal, and the new railroad will open markets for corn, fruit, sugar, and other products of the temperate and torrid zones, which grow here to perfection. It is particularly adapted to banana, orange, and pineapple culture. Corn, barley, and alfalfa yield enormously — in some instances three crops of cereals a year; coffee of good quality, exceptionally fine sugar-cane, tobacco, and cotton give large returns, while sisal fibre grows spontaneously. Lack of transportation facilities has hitherto left Sinaloa State and Tepic Territory isolated, little known, and undeveloped; but with the railroad in operation, this should bloom into the richest and most prosperous district in all Mexico.

In this connection a word of warning should be sounded to small investors. The average American knows less about Mexico and the conditions that prevail there than he knows of South Africa. In a

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vague, uncertain way he has come to believe in the country's wonderful possibilities, but he has no definite knowledge.

Placing their faith in this lack of information, get-rich-quick operators, chiefly in Chicago, New York, and our northeastern States, have widely advertised shares in rubber plantations, orange or banana groves, and sent out alluring circulars promising a life income to investors who are usually permitted to pay for stock in instalments. Nearly all of these schemes are fraudulent. Owners of Mexican haciendas that pay reasonable dividends are not philanthropists, and prefer to keep the dividends themselves. They do not let outsiders in. Companies organized to purchase and develop haciendas on the instalment or general stock distribution basis are organized only for the enrichment of the promoters. As a rule they are chimerical and no dividend is ever paid upon stock from the actual earnings of the hacienda, though sometimes, for the allurement of new victims, dividends are declared and paid out of moneys collected for stock sold. It rarely occurs that promoters ever make an honest effort to develop the properties purchased. That would cost money, and they prefer to put the ready cash directly into their pockets.

This is too frequently the case, also, with Mexican mining companies. The recent colossal copper, gold, and silver mining failures, reported by the newspapers, were conceived in fraud. I do not wish to be understood here as asserting that all mining propositions, or even a considerable proportion of them, are fraudulent; I am simply sounding a warning against dishonest promoters, and suggesting a thorough inves-

tigation on the part of prospective investors. Undoubtedly the richest mineral lands on this continent lie in Mexico, and large amounts of American capital are invested in many well paying mines now in operation; and they represent only a beginning of what may be expected.

Here, too, the Government is awake. Exceedingly liberal laws have been passed, for the purpose of inducing development—more liberal laws than our own. The troublesome restrictions laid down in former statutes have been repealed, and government officials are instructed to aid American investors with accurate information. Their duty is to see that mining claims are correctly registered, papers drawn in due legal form, and in general to protect those who undertake mining operations. The mining laws have been printed in English and Spanish for general distribution, and may be had at nominal cost upon application to the Government.

There is great need of custom smelters in Western Mexico. The erection of these will be made possible as railroad construction progresses, and mines now in operation are made more accessible and new mines opened.

Americans are discovering that Mexico offers large inducements to manufacturing industries, and considerable American capital is already invested in various parts of the country. But it is only a beginning. Water powers are numerous and open to denouncement. Innumerable opportunities await the enterprising manufacturer who takes advantage of this new field, and he may be well assured of Government protection and liberal treatment.

The best cotton in the world is grown in Mexico, and there is room for many mills. The entire crop is now required for local consumption, with a rapidly growing demand. There is wide opportunity for sugar mills, fruit canning, iron and wood working, and very many other lines of manufacture, and their establishment is courted by the Government. Vast coal fields await exploration and exploitation, and when the workings are opened steel and iron industries should spring up. At present the large iron deposits are practically untouched and nearly all the coal consumed in the Republic is imported from the United States and England.

Peon labor is cheap. The usual rate is from twenty-five to seventy-five cents (gold) per day (depending upon local conditions and sections), for the ordinary laborer, and ranging to a dollar and a half for more or less skilled workmen. Generally speaking, the peon lacks thrift. His needs are small, his opportunities limited, and he is content with what he has. Save on the numerous fiesta days he works steadily, however, and on the whole can be depended upon. On fiesta days he gives himself over to pleasure, partakes freely of the native intoxicants, *pulque* and *mescal*, and gambles away his earnings. He may not be held up to the world as an example of honesty.

Previous to 1888, Germany, France, and Great Britain controlled a large share of the trade of Mexico. Forty years ago Great Britain practically monopolized it. In recent years these countries have made comparatively small advance, while the United States has come strongly to the front. In the fiscal year ending with June, 1907, the imports from Germany, Great

Britain, and France were each less than one-sixth those from the United States. During that year the imports from the United States amounted to \$146,-376,585.60, while the exports to the United States reached \$175,809,123.63. Germany, on the other hand, sold Mexico considerably more than she purchased from her, as did France.

There is no reason why the United States should not sell Mexico practically everything she needs. Our goods are equal to the European product, and often superior. Close proximity, lower transportation rates, and quick delivery are all in our favor. One obstacle, however, that frequently stands in the way is the failure of our shippers to pack goods in accordance with instructions. In this respect the Europeans are much more particular, and on this ground alone often capture orders that normally would come to us if we would conform strictly to directions. All goods destined for outlying cities and towns, at a distance from the railroad, must be packed on muleback to their destination. With this in view, the Mexican merchant gives with his orders exact instructions as to the size or weight of packages in which he wishes goods put up. Our shippers disregard these instructions, and not infrequently goods arrive in Mexico in great unwieldy cases, necessitating repacking before transshipment can be made.

Customs on nearly all imports are reckoned upon weight, irrespective of cost. All invoices should therefore state this, according to the metric system. That is the system used in Mexico, and generally the only one understood there.

Financial failures in Mexico are rare. It may be

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said, almost without qualification, that the Mexican merchant is conservative, trustworthy, and thrifty, and discounts his bills promptly. When he sells goods on credit he is well assured that his customer is responsible, and when he purchases he knows absolutely that he will himself be in a position to meet his obligations. Monopolies, trusts, and corners are not permitted in the Republic, and the merchant and broker have not learned, and are not tempted, to venture into high finance.

In her currency reform Mexico is approaching the gold standard, and it may be said is even now upon a gold basis. She has established and guaranteed by law a fixed ratio between her gold and silver mediums. The *peso* is the standard of value, and is worth fifty cents United States money. Gold coins are rapidly coming into circulation. These are, however, of so recent coinage that during my journey in the Winter of 1907-1908 I had difficulty on more than one occasion in persuading the folk of isolated towns that they were really coins of the country and legal tender.

When Diaz came to the Presidency the National Treasury was empty and the country was without credit. Under his wise administration progression began at once, but the country was very poor and there seemed no way to equalize the receipts and disbursements of the Treasury. Year after year her Finance Ministers budgeted to a deficit, and the Budget Committees accepted the condition as one that could not be remedied. In presenting the budget for the fiscal year 1888-1889, the Committee remarked:

"Though in previous years the members of the Budget Commission have been the most prominent

men in the country in a political sense — enlightened financiers, possessing great experience in the management of public revenue — they have been unable to establish equilibrium between the receipts and disbursements of the Federal Treasury. The undersigned commission does not flatter itself, nay, cannot flatter itself, at having achieved that earnestly desired consummation, for it is almost an impossibility in the present circumstances of the country."

In 1893 Señor Jose Yves Limantour was appointed Minister of Finance, and within three years after he entered President Diaz's Cabinet accomplished the "impossible." At the close of the fiscal year 1895-1896, a surplus of \$5,451,347 was reported. No one could credit it. It was too great a novelty and too extraordinary an occurrence for belief. Steadily the surplus has grown under the wise financing of Limantour, until in the fiscal year 1906-1907 it reached \$29,000,000.

When Porfirio Diaz took the presidential chair in 1884, Mexico could not have floated a loan upon any terms, either in Europe or the United States. In 1904 banking houses in Europe and the United States entered into keen competition to secure the placing of an 80,000,000 peso (\$40,000,000) loan. Representatives of Berlin, Paris, and New York banks visited Mexico City to bid for it. A New York house succeeded, to the chagrin and disappointment of the other competitors. No government of Europe could have obtained better terms than those upon which Mexico secured her loan.

A close and cordial relationship has grown up between ourselves and our sister Republic. While there

is a feeling amongst the unversed — a feeling engendered and kept aflame by a few yellow journals of provincial cities, particularly west of the Sierras — that the United States has designs upon Mexican territory and hopes for ultimate annexation, I am happy to say that the Administration and the intelligent citizens of Mexico do not entertain it, and in sincerity express the most cordial feeling of good-fellowship for us, and heartily welcome Americans to their land. They recognize our mutual interests, and their friendship could not be more pronounced.

Mexico is building her progress upon a firm foundation. She is taking long strides toward a great future. She is making her place as a power, not only in North America, but amongst the nations of the world, and we of the United States are glad of it. She has problems still to face, first of which is perhaps the regeneration and uplifting of her peon Indian population.

In the Spanish days the peon was worked under the lash, like political prisoners in Siberia. His life was held at little value. He was kept in the densest ignorance, and has never risen above it. I have known peons in Western Mexico who did not know whether their country was a monarchy or a republic, whether Montezuma was Emperor or Diaz President. Free public schools are being established as rapidly as possible in cities and towns, and will doubtless later be extended to villages. It is the policy of the Government to educate and enlighten its people by this method, and bring them out of the dead past into the living present. Very conservative are these peons. They are slow to accept new methods or new ideas. As their ancestors ploughed and tilled, so they plough

and till; as their ancestors lived and dressed and thought, so do they.

A visit to Mexico is a revelation to the traveller and the tourist. Turning for a season from Europe to the South, he witnesses the incomparable scenery of this old new land, with its snow-capped peaks, its magnificent mountain heights, its awe-inspiring canyons, its vast plains, its picturesque villages, its ancient ruins, its historic towns, and quaint corners. He tarries for a while in the cool and flowery gardens, and pauses under the mighty trees that threw their shade a thousand years ago. Mexico City and all the surrounding country is rich in legend and romantic history.

And the hunter and sportsman? Let him pitch his camp in some vast pine forest, amid the lofty peaks of the Sierras, where the air is pure and the brooks run clear as crystal. He will find his ideal hunting-ground in these primeval solitudes, for it is a wilderness abounding in game, and almost unknown and unexplored.

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BEYOND THE MEXICAN SIERRAS

CHAPTER I

A FORGOTTEN LAND

AT half past one on the afternoon of October 16, 1907, the good ship *San Jose*, Captain Hans Thompson, cast loose from her wharf, turned her prow into the mist that hovered over San Francisco Bay, and made her course toward the Golden Gate and the broad Pacific. I was one of the passengers leaning at her rail to watch the fog swallow up the cliffs at "Land's End" and the last bit of hazy shore line fade from view. Mr. Wilmot Randall, a friend of my boyhood days, was my travelling companion. We were southward bound to that obscure and little-known section of Old Mexico lying beyond the Sierras, — that extensive area between the table-land and the Pacific Ocean, Sonora and Jalisco States, which has slumbered through the centuries undisturbed, and unmindful of the great world of progress and activity just beyond its borders.

We desired to learn something of its commercial prospects, but were called southward chiefly by the promise of unique experience and adventure in a country that had been to us in our youth one of romance and mystery. We had dreamed then of the time when we should see with our own eyes the won-

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derful mountains and gorgeous scenery of this wild land, and should stand amid the fruits and flowers of its tropical jungles.

That section of Western Mexico, comprising the State of Sinaloa, Western Durango, and Tepic Territory, which we were to visit, may be termed the Hinterland of the Republic. It is a counterpart of California before the gold rush of '49 — wild, little known, isolated, and uncivilized — one might almost say a forgotten land. But in these days of twentieth-century enterprise and awakening no land like Western Mexico can long remain in reposeful slumber. A railroad is in course of construction through its very heart. From Guaymas, in the northwest, to Guadalajara in the central south, the Southern Pacific Railroad is extending its lines. The engineers have already surveyed a route, work is being pushed, and in one or two years at the outside, it will be completed and trains will be thundering through the mountain passes and awaking the jungles with their rumble.

Colonizing schemes will spring into being as they did in California, the great haciendas will be divided into small ranches, and the country will be settled and civilized. It will be robbed of its seclusion, its quaint old Indian and Spanish customs, and, perhaps, of its contentment. It will be roused from its repose to a new era of push and enterprise.

Randall and I wished to see it in its wildest state, and to enjoy its pristine beauty before the hand of commercialism had begun the work of transformation and civilization. And if it is to be settled by Americans, what American will not wish to learn some-

thing of its probable future, and of the opportunities it may offer the would-be colonist or investor?

Our knowledge of the existing conditions in this Hinterland of Mexico was meagre and indefinite. The railroads of the East have never found their way across the mighty barrier of the Sierra Madres, to invade it. Save for one stage line which reaches its length, — impassable for wheeled vehicles during half the year, — rough jungle and mountain trails were the only lines of communication between its scattered settlements, and pack mules the only means of transportation. The difficulties and discomforts of travel, together with tales of brigandage and outlawry formerly committed here, which have from time to time been whispered to the outside world, have proved sufficient obstacles to turn from its borders the ordinary traveller. Therefore, with all the books that have been published upon Mexico and Mexican travel, no first-hand description in English has yet appeared of this isolated region. It is, in consequence, to the world in general a practically unknown country. Its chief characteristics may be summed up briefly.

Dense jungles cover the lower levels in the South, where water is plentiful, while great areas of the less favored North are semi-arid. In the higher altitudes, above the foothills, vast primordial forests of live oak and pine stretch away into dark distances over the serrated peaks of the Sierra Madres, with their mighty canyons and heights of magnificent grandeur. Ten turbulent rivers flow down across the State of Sinaloa in their course from the Cordilleras to the sea, and three others traverse the Territory of Tepic. With the exception of Mazatlan, the metropolis of Pacific

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Mexico, and the capital cities of Culiacan and Tepic, the population is sparse and scattered. There are a few small towns as distributing points for merchandise, and here and there small collections of Indian huts, where the natives live as their forefathers lived for untold generations before them, with little change in their habits or customs since the days when the great Montezuma ruled over his so-called Aztec Empire. But at the most, it is a thinly populated wilderness.

The first port of call for the Pacific mail steamers is Mazatlan, six days out from San Francisco, and to this port Randall and I had booked our passage. Here we had planned to purchase saddle and pack mules, employ guides, and thence penetrate the interior country north and south.

The air was raw and cold, the deck and rigging dripped moisture, and with the final disappearance of land, outside the Golden Gate, we turned shivering from the steamer rail to seek the shelter of the smoking-room. As we entered Randall remarked, with optimistic and comforting assurance,

“Another week and we’ll be bathing in the sunshine of tropical Mexico,” a remark which I remembered later.

We had a cosmopolitan crowd in the cabin. There were men from the Philippine Islands, China, Australia, and New Zealand, Panama Canal officials, the German Consul from Tepic, an artist and his wife, lately from abroad, miners from Alaskan gold fields, coffee growers from Central America, young Americans in the employ of Central American republics, two Chinese merchants, a woman lawyer, and by no

means the least among this world-wide aggregation, a gentleman from Nome who knew how to play poker. This game, the gentleman from Nome said, was his favorite amusement. Some of the young men who had an overplus of funds, and thought they could play poker too, sat with him in friendly contest for a while. He taught them wisdom, which they assimilated sadly. As each came from the game he talked about retrenching expenses, and I gathered that one lesson they had absorbed from the gentleman from Nome was how to economize. He was a very kind-hearted man, and always sympathized deeply with the unfortunate ones who had been divorced from the contents of their wallets during the course of instruction.

For two days dull, depressing weather remained with us. Clouds obscured the sun, fog hung over the sea, and the atmosphere was dank and dispiriting; but when we went on deck on the morning of the third day a wonderful transformation had taken place. The cheerless, sodden world of the night had in some mysterious manner turned into one of transcendent beauty. The calm blue sea shimmered in the sunlight, the air was mellow and balmy, not a cloud marred the soft-tinted turquoise sky, and sleepy and warm the coast of Lower California lay against the eastern horizon. It was as if some fairy had touched the old earth with her magic wand, and lo! a new world had sprung into being in a night. The officers appeared at breakfast in natty white duck uniforms, instead of the regulation blue, and the young men passengers, taking the cue, adopted a like dress.

We turned in at Magdalena Bay — not into the bay,

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but to the entrance — where we blew blasts of the whistle as a signal to the men-of-war lying inside to come out and get the mail we had for them. Presently the U. S. S. *Perry* appeared, swung about and launched a boat, with six bluejackets at the oars, and a nice new ensign all dressed in immaculate white, sitting in the stern, arms folded and looking as though he carried the dignity of the United States Navy upon his shoulders. The boat pulled alongside the *San Jose*, and the new ensign, still maintaining his dignity, reached for the ladder, missed it, and the immaculate uniform disappeared into the blue depths, leaving a white cap, without a wearer, bobbing up and down upon the waves. In a few seconds the ensign rose, holding high over his head, in one hand, some papers he was to deliver, and swimming gracefully and dexterously with the other, until he was happily rescued by his men before the sharks caught him. When he reached our deck, every bit of his dignity had been washed away, and he seemed filled with mortification and sea water.

On the twenty-first of October we made the turn around San Jose del Cabo and Cape St. Lucas, pointed eastward across the Gulf of Lower California, and early the next morning came to our anchorage off Mazatlan. Randall and I had everything packed, ready to go ashore as soon as the port doctor gave us a clean bill of health.

Three hours of impatient waiting elapsed before the government officials appeared. At length they came in three boats — the doctor and two customs officers. And here we were doomed to disappointment and vexation. We were adjudged undesirable citizens,

and told that we must not leave the ship unless we were willing to have the undesirable qualities fumigated out of us and our baggage, and then submit to four days in limbo. This was hard indeed! We were bubonic plague suspects, and they did not want us. The yellow flag was hoisted at our masthead, and all boats warned away.

Randall and I were in a quandary. Fumigation would doubtless injure, if nor ruin, my photographic films, and the quarantine pen for ourselves was horrible to contemplate — four days with a medley of Chinese, Koreans, and what not! It was a question with us whether it would be better to face fumigation and the pest-house here, or go on to San Blas, the next port of call to the south, and take the chance of passing quarantine there without detention. The chief consideration against going to San Blas was a rumor that horses and mules were scarce at that port, and we might not be able to get animals to carry us upon our inland journey. We were discussing this when a good friend came to our rescue, and decided it for us.

One of our fellow passengers, Mr. Edwin Emerson, a ranchman of Mountain View, California, was bound for San Blas, *en route* to the Hacienda San Nicolás, a hacienda two days' journey inland, in which he was interested. Besides himself, his party consisted of Lorenzo L. Gates, manager of the hacienda, and Charles Bigelow, scientific farmer. Mr. Emerson suggested that we join them. He offered to supply us with saddle horses and pack mules, and invited us to accept the hospitality of the Hacienda San Nicolás, and make it our base of operations while in Tepic Territory.

This helped us out of our disagreeable situation,

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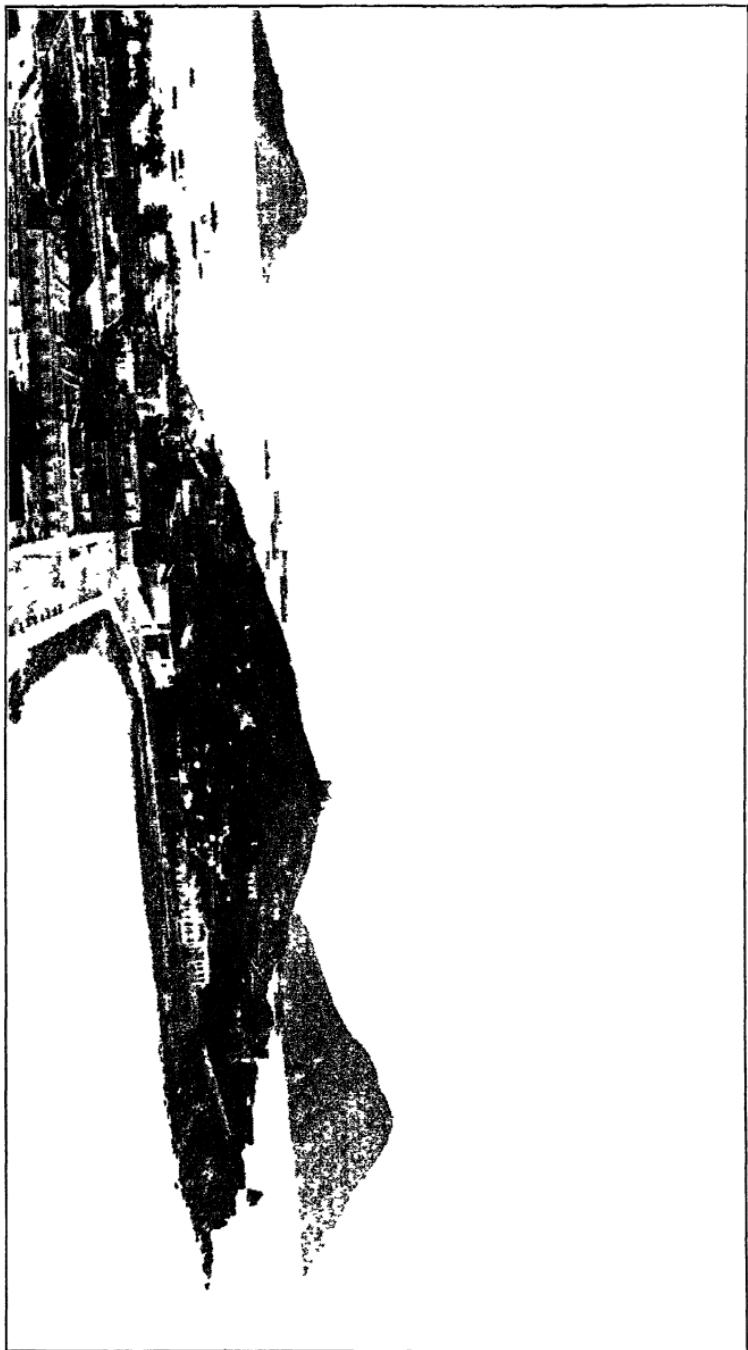
and at the same time offered unusual opportunities to see the country under the guidance of Gates, who had lived for several years in Mexico, and was familiar with its language and customs. It is needless to say that with due thankfulness and promptitude we accepted Mr. Emerson's invitation, paid our passage to San Blas, and defied the port doctor and customs officers to do their worst.

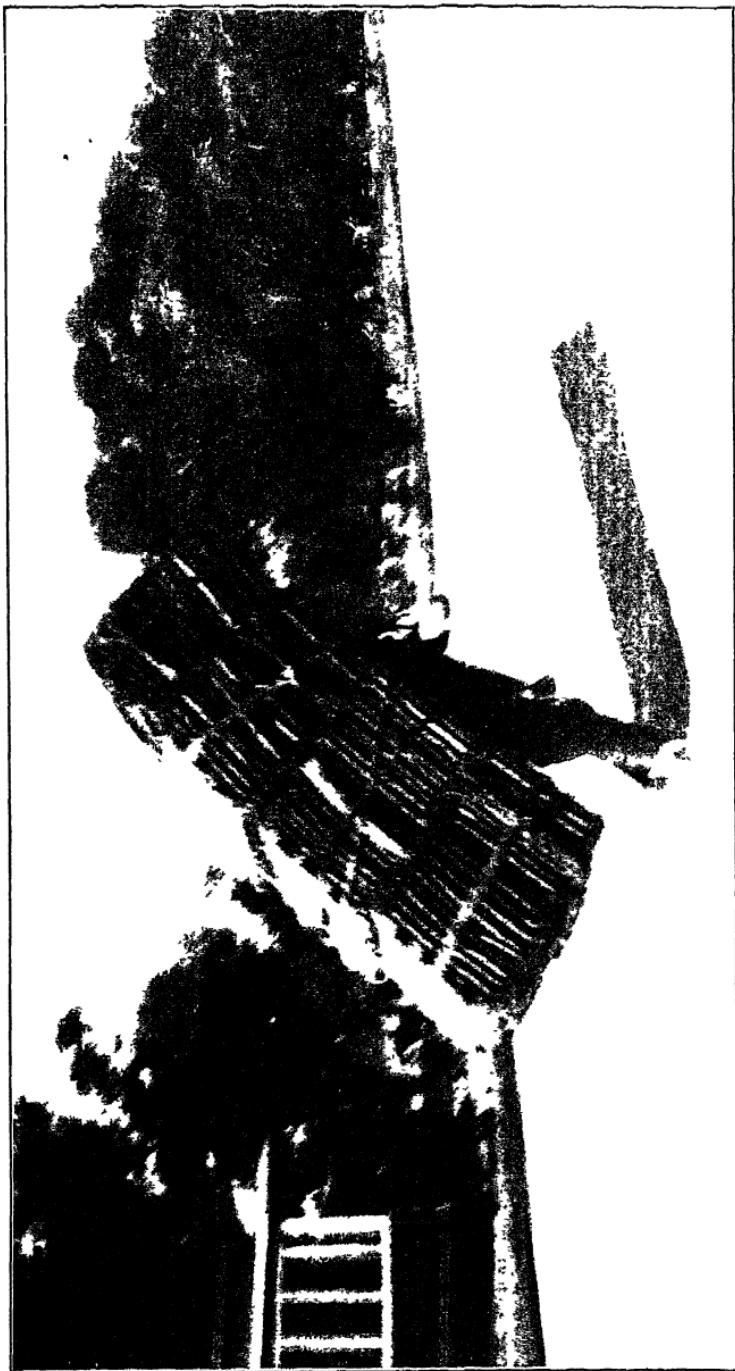
We lay listlessly at anchor all day, during which time the port authorities fumigated the freight in the hold, and the baggage of the one cabin passenger and the steerage passengers who were going ashore.

Mazatlan newspapers were brought aboard and Randall translated for me. One of them contained an editorial upon the granting of Magdalena Bay to the United States Navy as a practice ground. "The robbers have come," the editorial read. "This is their entering wedge. Mexico is at their mercy. Who can doubt that they have designs upon our beloved country? The Government in its weakness has granted this concession of Magdalena Bay, and permitted these brigands to gain a foothold upon our soil. The history of Texas and California will be repeated. The object of these Northern robbers is plain. It is to grab our country and absorb it."

Randall could read Spanish very well, and I was comforted with the belief that he could speak it also, and that he would be our mouthpiece in dealing with the natives. He proudly informed me that he had acquired a good knowledge of the language through text-books and a phonograph, without the aid of an instructor. The phonograph had taught him the Castilian pronunciation, of which he was very proud,

Mazatlan harbor





Photograph by Charles N. Remington

A. cargadore

and upon which he laid special stress. He assured me that he could "fire it in long, well-rounded sentences at will and with precision." These were his own words. He had even volunteered to teach me. For an hour or so I studied hard, and succeeded in absorbing one word — "si," which means "yes." There I discontinued my efforts. "What is the use?" I asked Randall. "You can do all the necessary talking for both of us."

Now, at Mazatlan, he had an opportunity for the first time to experiment with his linguistic acquirements. Venders in their dugout canoes crowded about offering cigars, sugar-cane, tortoise-shell, and fruits of various kinds for sale. Randall went boldly to the rail, and sprung his Castilian Spanish, quite without warning, upon one of them. The fellow looked mystified for a moment, and then delivered a lot of good Mexican Spanish in return. It was Randall's turn now to be mystified, and shocked. He turned to me, an inscrutable look on his face, and gasped,

"If that's Spanish, I can't understand one word of it!"

Mazatlan is a picturesque place. A lighthouse stands high upon the small mount, Cerro del Creston, at the north entrance of the shallow bay, — the highest lighthouse in the world, save Gibraltar, — and the south entrance is guarded by rugged rocks. In the distance lies the town, with its cathedral spires standing prominently against the sky; below, cocoanut palms and thatched roofs; and in the blue distance the towering peaks of the Cordilleras complete the scene. A cooling breeze modified the rigors of the

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midday tropical heat, and the night was one of splendor, with a gorgeous sunset followed by a full and brilliant moon.

On our second morning at Mazatlan, the port officers came aboard again and very inconsiderately roused every one out of his bed at half past six, and lined us up on deck — cabin passengers, steerage passengers, and crew — while the doctor reexamined us for bubonic plague. He found us still healthy and vigorous, but did not remove the quarantine restrictions. He could not understand how we had escaped the raging scourge of plague that every one here believed existed in San Francisco.

We were told that once, several years before, the plague had appeared in Mazatlan, and before it was subdued the town was all but depopulated. Hence their fear and apparent caution now. I say "apparent caution," for later in the day *cargadores* came aboard, discharged the cargo for the port into lighters, mingled with the passengers, and passed back and forth, between the ship and the city, at will; and yet passengers were not permitted this privilege. They locked one door securely, and left the other wide open.

Three days in Mazatlan, and we were off, and the following morning anchored in front of San Blas, where we were actually to disembark. Right before us lay the thatched roofs, the palms, the fruits, the flowers, and the forests of tropical America, the dreamland of our youth, with its queer people and queer customs, and we were to see it all with our own eyes and be a part of it, too, for a while.

CHAPTER II

IN OLD SAN BLAS

THERE was little formality to be gone through at San Blas. The port doctor came aboard, looked at the whites of our eyes, and passed us with the wave of a hand. We were more than ten days out of San Francisco — the period of incubation for bubonic plague — and they considered us harmless and inoffensive now. We were no longer suspected of harboring dark designs upon Mexico, and the self-respect that we lost at Mazatlan was regained at San Blas.

Emerson buckled his revolver on, and told us we had better follow his example before going ashore, as it was quite fashionable to wear them here. We did so, but I felt very much as a young man does when he dons his first evening clothes and appears in public in them; and though I pushed my big Colt back under my coat, to hide it as much as possible from the gaze of the populace, it would protrude in spite of me, and seemed like a ton's weight upon my belt. However, when the boat came that was to take us ashore, and I saw that at least one of the boatmen wore a beltful of cartridges, with a revolver in a leather holster dangling from it, I felt better about it.

The boatmen were *moros* (servants) from the Hacienda San Nicolás, who had been despatched from

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the interior ranch with horses and mules to meet Emerson and his party.

On the edge of the low, flat ground, which stretches from the beach to the foothills of the Cordilleras, punctuated by one abrupt bluff a mile from the sea, the town lies, half hidden by an exuberant growth of tropical foliage and stately cocoanut palms. Its main street, running up from the sea, is lined with substantial, mortar-covered, whitewashed stone buildings of Spanish architecture, flanked on either side by crooked, narrow streets, along which are massed flimsily constructed huts, thatched with palm leaves and sea grass. The effect of the whole is somewhat Oriental, as one approaches the sandy beach, though a more intimate view robs it of its Oriental aspect, and makes it typically Mexican. This Oriental coloring led Randall to remark,

"Makes me think of Cairo or some other Bible town that I've read of." Randall is not strong on Biblical history.

Barelegged, bareheaded *cargadores* and sandalled peons, wearing skin-tight trousers and immense high-crowned, broad-brimmed sombreros of straw or felt, — a brown-skinned, black-haired medley, — crowded around us in eager curiosity as we stepped ashore. Emerson's two mozos, with the help of half a dozen of the *cargadores*, carried our baggage to the custom house, where a polite officer, who spoke good English, passed it with a very cursory examination; and the first ordeal — one that every one dreads upon entering a strange country — was over.

But Emerson had troubles of his own ahead, in the shape of two pigs that he was taking to his hacienda.

He suggested to the officer that the pigs should be passed free of duty, as they would be of decided benefit to the country, in improving the stock.

"Oh, yes, certainly we passa th' pig," said the polite official. "We carra much for th' improve of stock of Mexico, but Señor Emerson will be pleased to signa some paper first."

Emerson, not to be outdone in politeness by the official, bowed low and said he would, and it was right there his troubles began. All the afternoon he was kept busy signing documents. Now and again we met him, coat on arm, one hand grasping a hand-kerchief, with which he desperately mopped perspiration from his face, the other hand filled with papers, rushing up and down the scorching street on the trail of an official. He wrote his name on twenty-seven different documents for twenty-seven different officials that afternoon, and each time had to purchase and affix an internal revenue stamp. I never did learn how much he paid for the stamps, but the pigs were admitted duty free.

When I refer to the afternoon, I mean after two o'clock. At eleven in the forenoon all business stops, all shops close, the people go to their *siesta*, and the streets are deserted.

Our formalities at the custom house were completed by ten o'clock, and we went at once to the Hotel Americano, where we were received with much formality, and shown to our rooms — two rooms for the five of us. They were furnished with a wash-stand, a couple of chairs in each, and with beds about the size of ordinary cots. Each bed was simply a single piece of canvas stretched over a frame, with a

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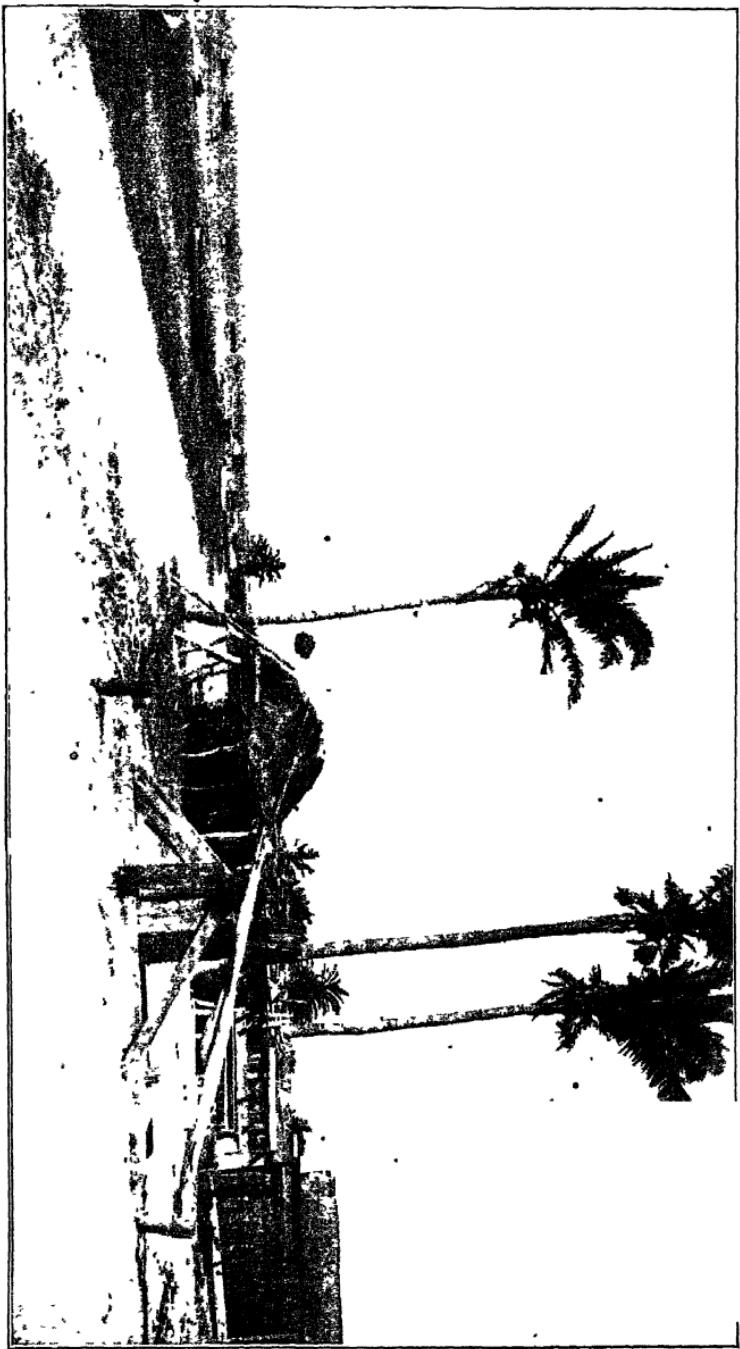
sheet over that, and a straw or hay pillow. A canopy of cheese-cloth, about four feet high, enclosed each as a protection against sand flies and mosquitoes. The floor was bare.

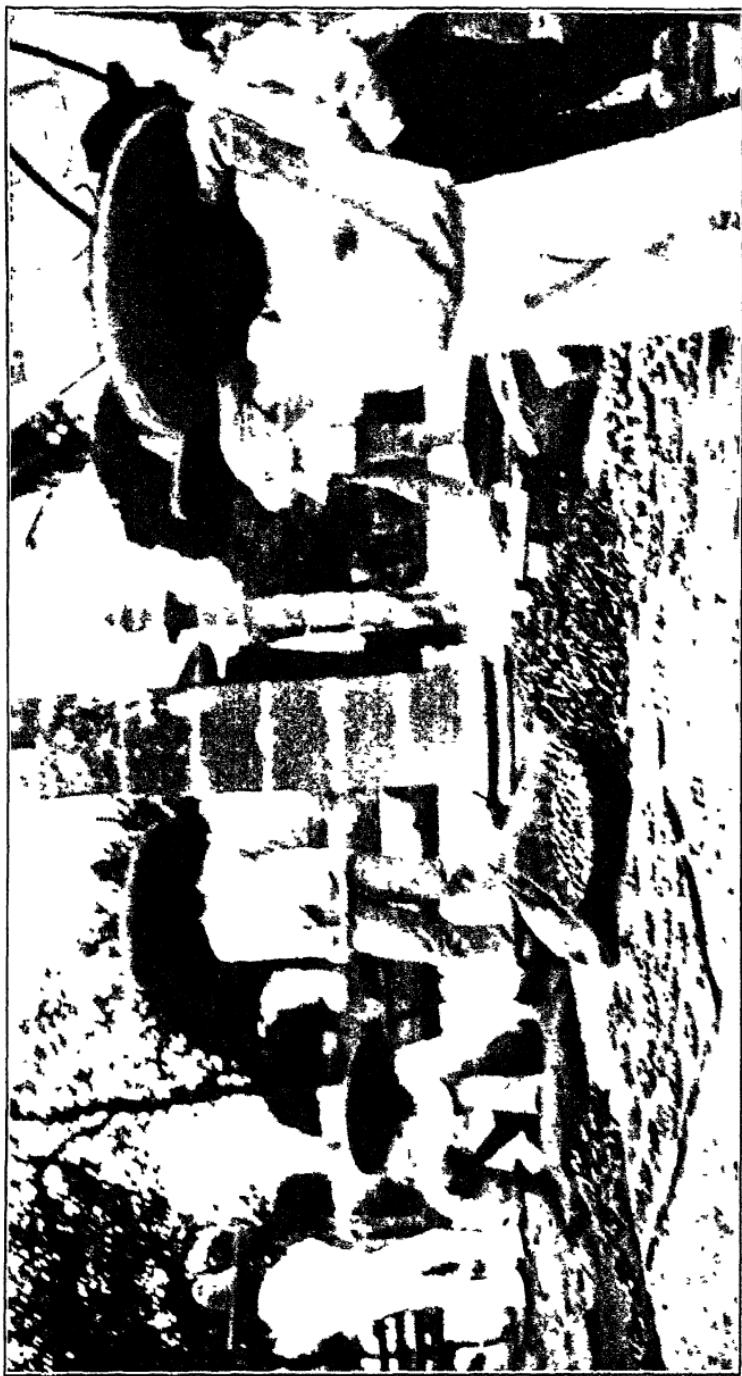
Our rooms were on the second or top floor of the house. On one side, windows looked upon the main street, while our doors opened upon a balcony overlooking the hotel *patio*, or courtyard, in which grew cocoanut palms, banana plants, lemon trees with ripe fruit that we could reach from the balcony, and many brilliant tropical flowers and plants. There were also sand flies and fleas galore, and when we drew our chairs to the balcony to smoke a while and cool off, while the mozos brought up our baggage, we were startled by a lizard about eighteen inches long, a row of horns down the back of his head, and glaring eyes, which looked like "the devil himself," as Emerson said, though we were told it was only an *aquila*, and harmless. I did not care to associate with him, however, and let him see it, and he went away. His personal appearance was against him.

At dinner, which was eaten under our balcony, and out of doors, where we could enjoy the fragrance of the flowers and foliage of the patio, we had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Mr. William Ramos, a banana grower, who lived at the hotel, and had the distinction of being the only American resident of San Blas. Ramos was delighted to see us, because we were Americans, and he was more than a little lonesome.

The dinner began with soup, followed by an array of courses, mostly compounds of things I did not recognize, and nearly all very hot with chilli-peppers,

Cocoanut palms





A corner of the market-place, San Blas

but on the whole palatable. *Frijoles* (beans) were served just before the *dulce*. That is a warning that you have had all you are going to get, and to satisfy yourself upon them, if you have not had enough of the other things. They were well cooked and good. The bread was in the form of rolls, sweetened, and of poor quality — “*pan blanco*” they call it. It was the characteristic bread, however, of Mexico — when bread is to be had at all. The coffee was of good quality, but, like all Mexican coffee, muddy and very strong. It is burned black in roasting, ground to a powder, boiled, and served with the grounds. One is supposed to drink the grounds.

After dinner Ramos took us about the town. It has, he informed us, about two thousand inhabitants. The buildings on the main street, as has been hinted, are mostly of substantial Spanish architecture, while the others are mere shacks of poles and mud, with thatched roofs and without floors. The main street is paved with cobblestones, through which grass grows, and from the sea front to the custom house is a miniature railroad, on which a push-car is operated, to carry freight from the landing to the warehouses.

Men and women lounged in the little shops, drinking *mescal* and *tequila*, their native whiskey. The latter is simply a better quality of the former. The best shops are kept by Chinamen, and everything is sold in them, from dry-goods to fruit. We stopped at one and drank some cocoanut milk, and then ate the soft meat from the green fruit with a spoon. They do not eat the cocoanut here after it has ripened. We also tested the oranges, green-skinned but ripe and sweet, all seedlings grown without cultivation and

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therefore not to be compared in quality with the oranges of California; and bananas, from a delicious small banana, not larger than your thumb, to the immense *platen grande*, which is cooked as a vegetable. The bananas are no better than those to be had at any New York fruit stand, for they are ripened in the same way — after they are cut.

In the rear of the municipal building on the north side of the plaza is the theatre, a unique feature of the town. It is a stage facing upon an open court, or patio, and Ramos told us that people attending performances bring their own chairs with them, or squat upon the ground. The plaza opposite is a beautiful little square filled with tropical plants and with a bandstand in the centre. Every town in Mexico has its plaza and bandstand. But what interested us most was the market-place, where pottery, meat, vegetables, leather goods, dry-goods — nearly everything a Mexican needs for his comfort — were displayed for sale. The vegetables were divided into little piles representing one, two, or three *centavos** worth, and very often fruits or vegetables were cut to make the exact quantity desired.

Big sombreros of straw or felt, often trimmed elaborately with gilt and ornaments, were the chief characteristic of the men's dress. The remainder of the costume was in many instances not enough to remark about. The women were slovenly and ugly. I feel qualified to speak upon this matter, for Randall and I, both of a romantic turn of mind, looked into every face for one specimen of the "enchanting, dark-eyed

*A *centavo* is a Mexican cent, equal to one-half cent United States currency.

señoritas," whose beauty is extolled by nearly every writer on Mexico, but failed in the quest. The eyes were dark enough, but so was the skin;—almost as dark as that of our average Southern negro, and the features were not good to look upon.

It is not entirely correct to say that the market-place is the most interesting feature of the town. The policemen hold that honor. The first specimen I saw was leaning against a post in a nice, shady corner, puffing contentedly at a cigarette, and apparently quite oblivious of and superior to his surroundings. He wore a dirty white cotton tunic, unbuttoned, dirty cotton trousers, a white peaked cap, and sandals. A big revolver, with its muzzle sticking out behind and below his tunic, and a club hanging listlessly by a string from his wrist, were his weapons of offence and defence. Listless, ambitionless, staring vacantly into space, with apparently no purpose in life but to hold up that post and pass away the time, he was the best representative of human vacuity of mind and official indolence I ever saw. It appeared to me as though it would require a dynamite cartridge to blow a breath of activity into him. But I was mistaken in the gentleman. I approached him.

"Will señor permit me to take his portrait?" I asked, forgetting that English was a foreign tongue to him.

He did not move, but displayed some interest.

"Just a snapshot," I said briskly. "I'll have it published, and señor will be immortalized."

He developed more interest, but I saw he did not appreciate his opportunity to be immortalized.

"I want to get your picture," I repeated.

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He straightened up and said a few sentences in Spanish. He was becoming quite animated. Then it dawned upon me that he did not understand English and I looked around for Ramos to interpret for me, but he and the others had gone on. So I tried again. The position was becoming rather awkward, and I put more stress and enthusiasm into my voice, in a vain hope that he might grasp my meaning.

"Just your picture — I just want to get your picture."

The policeman, now standing quite independent of the support of the post, pointed down the street in the direction the others had gone, and reeled off a whole string of Spanish at me. I thought he understood at last, and was inquiring whether I wished him to step out into the sunshine in the street. Bringing my entire Spanish vocabulary to my assistance, I said, very sweetly,

"*Si, señor.*"

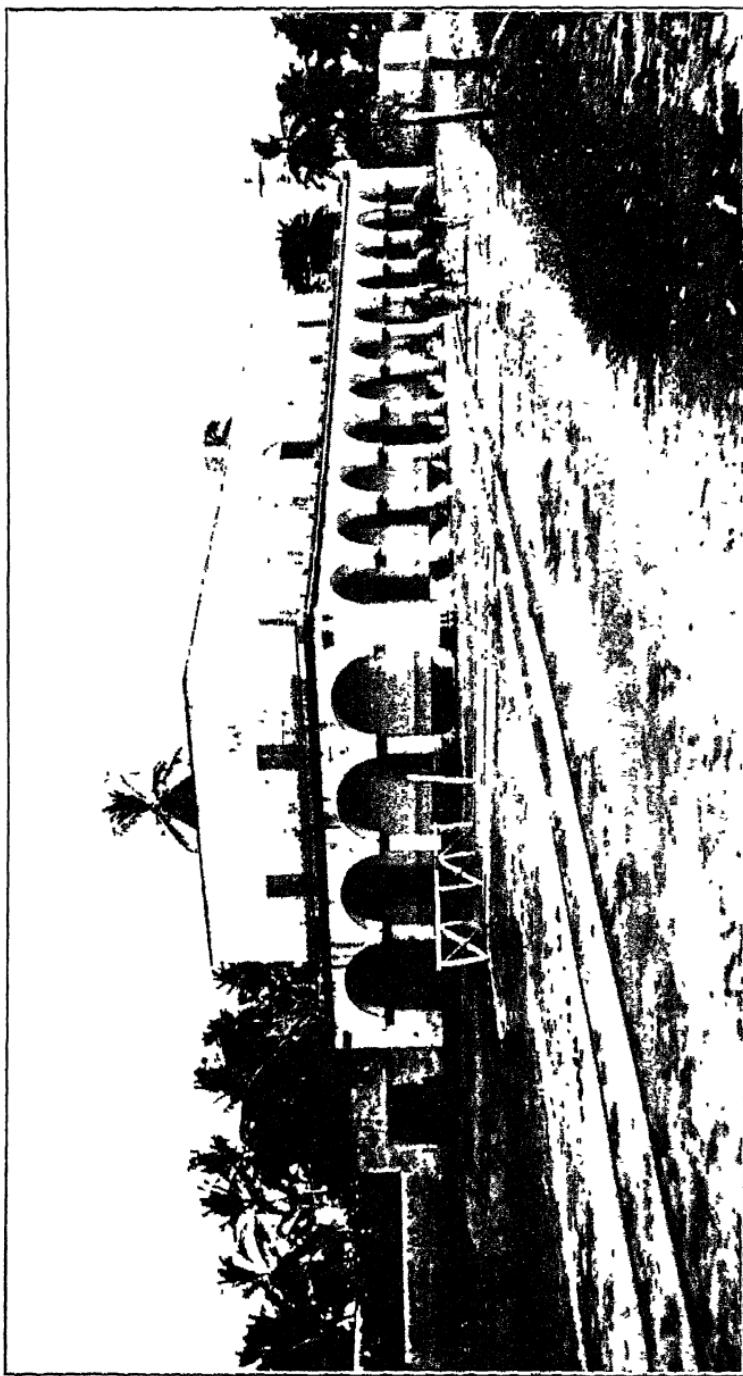
The result was magical. The policeman clutched his club firmly, and started up the street at a good pace after Ramos, Randall, and the others. He thought they were malefactors, and I was telling him of some dark and bloody deed that they had committed. He was going to run them in. In desperation I headed him off and shouted:

"No! No! *señor*, photograph," at the same time unfolding my camera. A crowd was gathering and the situation was becoming strenuous for me.

The officer halted and smiled. He at last comprehended. "No" was very good Spanish, so was "*señor*," and "photograph" sounded very like the Spanish word for the same thing, and all this, in con-



"The officer halted and smiled"



Custom House, San Blas

nexion with the unfolded camera, made my meaning clear. The policeman stood still where I placed him, assumed the most soldierly pose of which he was capable, and I made my snapshot. I thanked him cordially, we doffed our hats to each other and shook hands, and then he went back to lean against his post in the shade, quite a hero in the eyes of the admiring crowd, which gathered around him to talk over the occurrence as I hurried on to find my friends.

In this little town there are seven or eight policemen. At night one sees them at the corners, their lanterns, which they always have with them after sunset, standing out in the middle of the narrow streets. There are no wagons or carriages in San Blas, and the horsemen and pack mules turn out for them. At nine o'clock in the evening, and every hour thereafter until daylight, one hears their whistles. As the clock strikes the hour, the sharp, shrill tones of one sounds out upon the night, to be followed by another and another, like an oft-repeated echo, in the distant corners of the town, until all have answered. A policeman's wages here are thirty-two centavos a day (sixteen cents), and out of this he must live and provide for his family, if he has one. This, of course, applies only to San Blas. Each individual town has its own separate police system, with its distinctive regulations as to uniform, wages, and so on.

Between the soldiers and the police a pretty close watch is kept upon the movements of travellers everywhere in the Republic. When a stranger secures accommodation at a hotel where no regular register of the guests is kept, he is requested to write his name, and where he last came from, upon a slip of

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paper. This slip is turned over to the police, and intercommunication between the police of various towns, and the soldiers, keeps the visitor well under the eye of the authorities.

The whole town of San Blas turned out that night to do honor to two señoritas of uncertain reputation, who came over on the steamer from Mazatlan. They were not quite so dark in complexion, and were so much better looking than the damsels of the town, that the men — and the women, too, for that matter — were quite infatuated by them — excepting the two maiden ladies who ran our hotel. These maiden ladies declined to extend the hospitality of their house to the attractive señoritas, and the said attractive ones were forced to find shelter in an inferior hotel at the market-place, where the susceptible proprietor received them literally with open arms. Later in the evening, we applauded the maiden ladies for their good judgment and thoughtfulness for the comfort of their guests, for the populace and the town band massed in the market-place before the other hotel. During the night, whenever the fleas and sand flies roused us to consciousness, we heard the noise over there. On these occasions we would turn over and go to sleep again, giving thanks that the racket was not being made under *our* windows.

Later I heard the story of what took place. Two or three of the wealthiest natives, including civil officials of the town, employed the band to play, purchased a quantity of liquid refreshments, and invited their friends to a reception in honor of the two charmers. Well along in the night, after everybody had withdrawn except two of the three who had

arranged the affair, one of these gentlemen gave the señoritas a substantial honorarium to present some special Spanish dances before them. The other subscriber returned and applied at the door for admission just as the dancing was at its height. Those within had no time or inclination to open the door, and the one without inconsiderately broke it down, frightening the musicians and the dancers to such an extent that one of the gentlemen within was moved to protest, and as an expression of the annoyance he felt at the rude entrance, drew his gun and proceeded to shoot up the intruder. The newcomer drew his gun too, and used it, but they were all so intoxicated, or such poor marksmen, that no one was seriously injured by the fusillade. Finally my friend, the policeman, with two or three other officers, appeared and put a stop to the disturbance.

San Blas, which stands at the mouth of the Santiago Rio, was founded by the Spaniards in the middle or latter part of the sixteenth century. The original town was built upon a hill, which rises abruptly and prominently out of the low surrounding country. In the rear, this hill has steep slopes, but in front, toward the ocean, it presents walls of perpendicular rock, rising sheer from the plain below, as though reared by some gigantic hand to support the once formidable fortress that stood upon its summit. Glowering guns commanded the harbor at the entrance to the Santiago River, where the merchantmen that carried on the growing trade with the Orient and the rich islands of the Southern sea took refuge, and where, in extensive shipyards, men-of-war were fashioned to guard Spain's possessions in the Pacific.

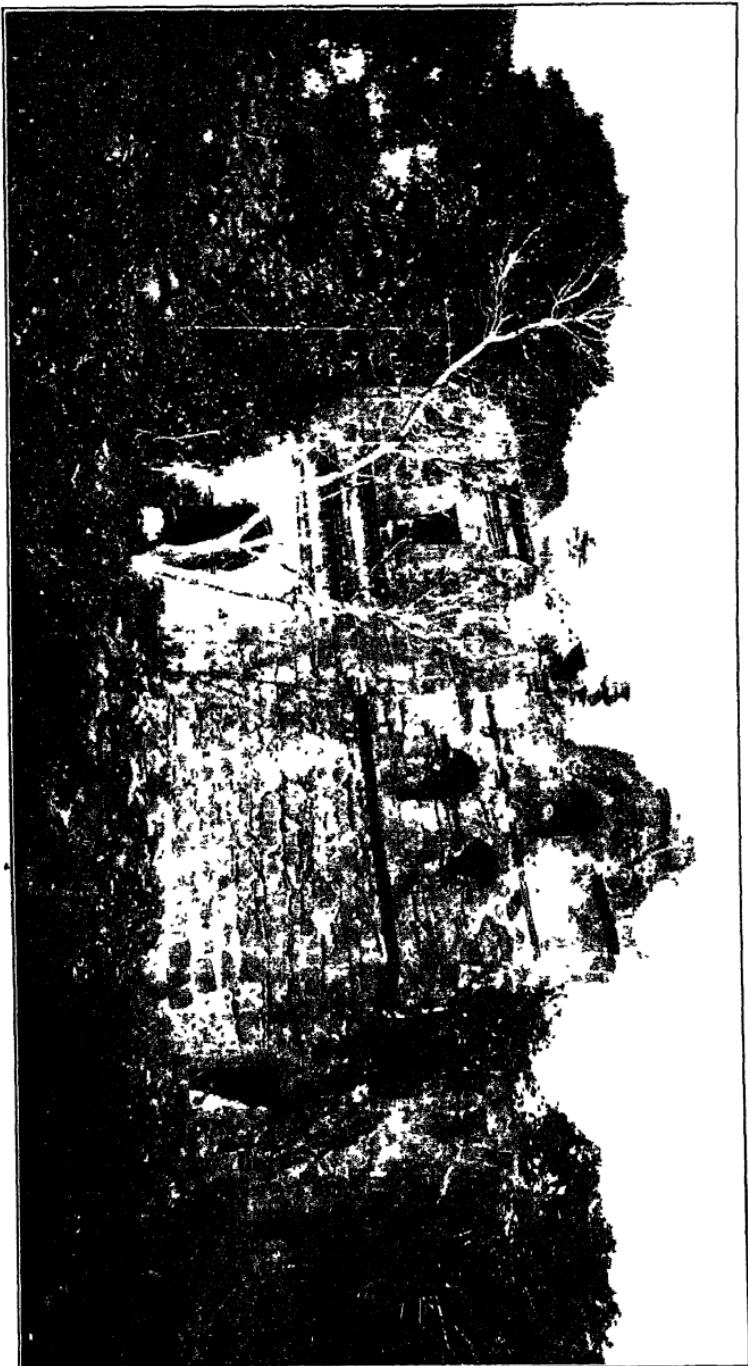
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San Blas was then the gateway to the Pacific, as Vera Cruz was the gateway to the Atlantic, and Spanish enterprise — for that was in the day of Spain's glory and progress — built a great highway from port to port, linking the two gateways and laying the foundation for a lucrative trade between the Occident and the Orient. It was over this road the artillery and military supplies for the fort were drawn, and over it thronged long mule trains heavily laden with Oriental plunder.

But time works wondrous changes. Spain has fallen from her glory and lost her place among nations; the sea, which once broke against the face of the cliff, has receded and left the high bluff a full mile inland; sand bars block the entrance to the once active harbor; the shipyards have disappeared, and are forgotten; the powerful fort, the great arsenal, and the once beautiful town lie in ruins, half hidden by tropical jungle. Even authentic records of the establishment of the town and building of the military road have disappeared, and tradition is all that remains — a tradition so intermingled with legends that a culling leaves almost nothing of reliable history.

It is quite certain, however, that the old town was not wholly abandoned for the new one, down by the water's edge, until after the revolution that freed Mexico from Spanish rule. When in Tepic, Mr. Eugen Hildebrand, the German Consul, showed me a book written by one James Colnet, an English whaling captain, in the year 1798, in which the author tells of a voyage he made on the Pacific coast, in 1792, in search of the spermaceti whale. The Captain was captured by the Spaniards and taken prisoner to San

The ruins of the old cathedral





A corner of the ruined fortress

Blas fortress, which he describes as "on the south side of the Saint Jago River ['Santiago,' as we spell it now], and contains the grand arsenal and dock-yards of the Province of Mexico. . . . It is situated upon a small mount that rises in the middle of a marsh, which joins the dockyard about two miles from it. . . . The face of the rock towards the sea is perpendicular, one hundred fathoms high, and presents a very formidable appearance." Captain Colnet's estimate of the height of the wall is at least two hundred feet too great. Otherwise we are bound to accept his description of San Blas as he saw it, for, as far as we can learn, all the official records were destroyed during the Mexican revolution, and no other account has survived.

Of course we had to climb the hill with Ramos, and walk around the massive ruins of the old fort, the once beautiful cathedral, and the decayed buildings of the town, all of stone blocks cut from the hill. The interior arches of the cathedral were still in place. Two mozos, with machetes, cut away enough of the growth to enable me to photograph portions of the ruins. The cemetery, farther back, is still used for burial; and in front of the cathedral we found some vine-covered tombs. What a monument to dissipated power and lack of national foresight the old town is! Here crumbled and rotted the bones of Spain's great empire on the Pacific.

Amongst the many legends centring around old San Blas and the ruined fortress is one, devoutly believed by the aged peons, of the Padre Mercado, a patriotic priest who lived here during the early days of the war of independence. Padre Mercado, as the

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legend goes, warmly espoused the cause of the revolutionists. He roused the people to arms, earnestly exhorted them to fight for freedom from the yoke of Spanish oppression, and personally led them in many desperate assaults against the fort. One day, however, he was discovered within the town, unguarded and alone. The Spanish soldiers cut off his retreat, and hotly pursued by them, whose desire it was to capture him alive, he ran to the edge of the cliff. Nothing but death on the rocks below, or capture, seemed left to him, when lo! the angels of God intervened. The Padre was surrounded by a blaze of glory, and before the very eyes of his pursuers ascended into heaven!

The soldiers who witnessed the miracle fled in terror to the fort, and reported the occurrence to the commandant. This officer was skeptical, and personally conducted a search of the rocks below the cliff, confidently expecting to find there the mangled remains of the Padre. But the search was unsuccessful, and finally even he had to accept, in the face of overwhelming evidence, the truth of the good priest's translation into Heaven.

Another version of the story is that the body was found by the commandant, and as an example to the revolutionists was attached to a lariat behind horses and ignominiously dragged through the streets. This is doubtless what really happened, though the reader is free to decide for himself.

Reluctantly we turned from the old town to the new. Emerson's pigs were duly admitted to citizenship, and nothing more was to be seen or done in San Blas. Arrangements had been made with mozos to

transport the pigs and heavier luggage up the Santiago River, in dugout canoes, to the Hacienda San Nicolás, while the personal baggage of our party was to accompany us upon two pack mules, as we journeyed into the distant hills and mountains of Tepic, which lay in a blue haze beyond the flat lands to the eastward.

CHAPTER III

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

WE had hoped to get an early morning start, and thus avoid the scorching rays of the midday sun; but it was not until ten o'clock that our mozos announced everything ready, and we finally mounted and rode eastward through the long main street, circled the foot of San Blas Hill, and out into the open country.

A short way from town a narrow estuary was crossed upon a catamaran ferry propelled by men hauling upon a rope stretched from shore to shore. Why they do not bridge this bit of water I do not know, for it is little wider than the ferry-boat, but probably because it is a source of income to the Government. The ferrymen have to get a concession, for which they pay, and an internal revenue is collected upon all fares received.

For four or five miles our road wound through a marsh, and for a mile our horses splashed stirrup-deep in water. Then we reached the first rise of the foot-hills, and a tropical jungle, dense and high, closed in upon us, and shut out the last breath of air that in the open marsh below had fanned our cheeks, and in some degree made tolerable the burning intensity of the noonday sun. I had never experienced such heat before. In a little while we were drenched with perspiration. Our clothing clung to us like wet bathing

suits, and I recalled Randall's comforting assurance on the steamer. We were, in truth, "bathing in the sunshine of tropical Mexico."

Somewhere, just above the marsh, a trail branches off to the left, and with easier grades than those of the old military road, which we were on, follows the valley of the Santiago River. It was suggested that we turn into this, but the mozos informed us that it had not yet drained since the rainy season, which was just at an end, and was still submerged in places; in fact, that it seldom became passable before the middle of December.

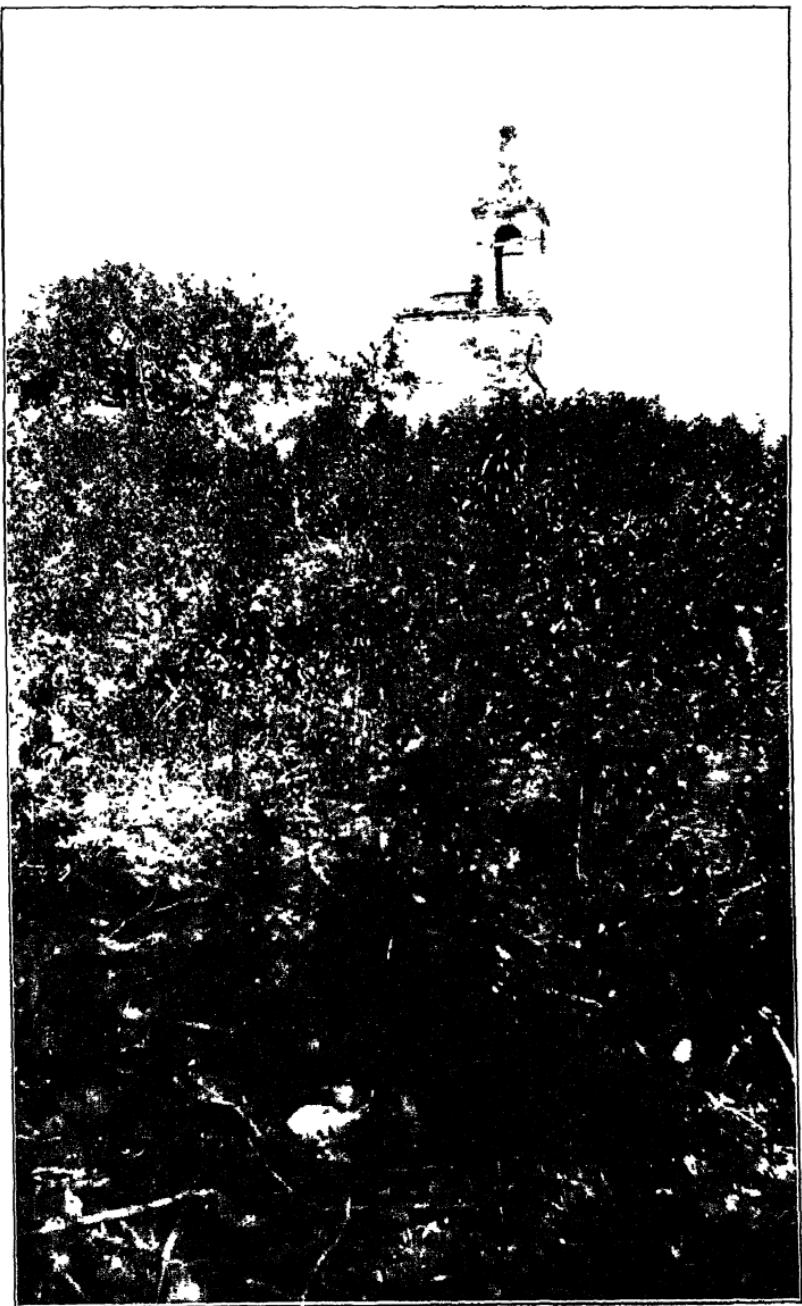
But we did not mind the longer and steeper way, for we were treading historic ground, and were filled with the romance of it. Here and there round paving-stones, laid long ago by the Spaniards, were still in place, and bits of supporting wall remained to tell of the infinite labor expended in the construction of the road. Three centuries fell out of time and in our fancy we saw the slaves who laid those very stones toiling under the lash of the cruel Spaniard; trains of gay adventurers rode by; we heard the rumble of heavy artillery wagons on the rock-paved road; bands of the murderous soldiers of the Conquest passed us, leaving behind them a trail of terror and of blood. In reality the old highway was quite deserted, save for one pack train of mules, laden with merchandise, that we passed, silently wending its way inland to Tepic City.

Stately palms and gigantic ferns, with a luxuriant tropical undergrowth, made impenetrable the jungle that lined our road. Marvellous flowering vines that entwined themselves in the forest trees, blooming

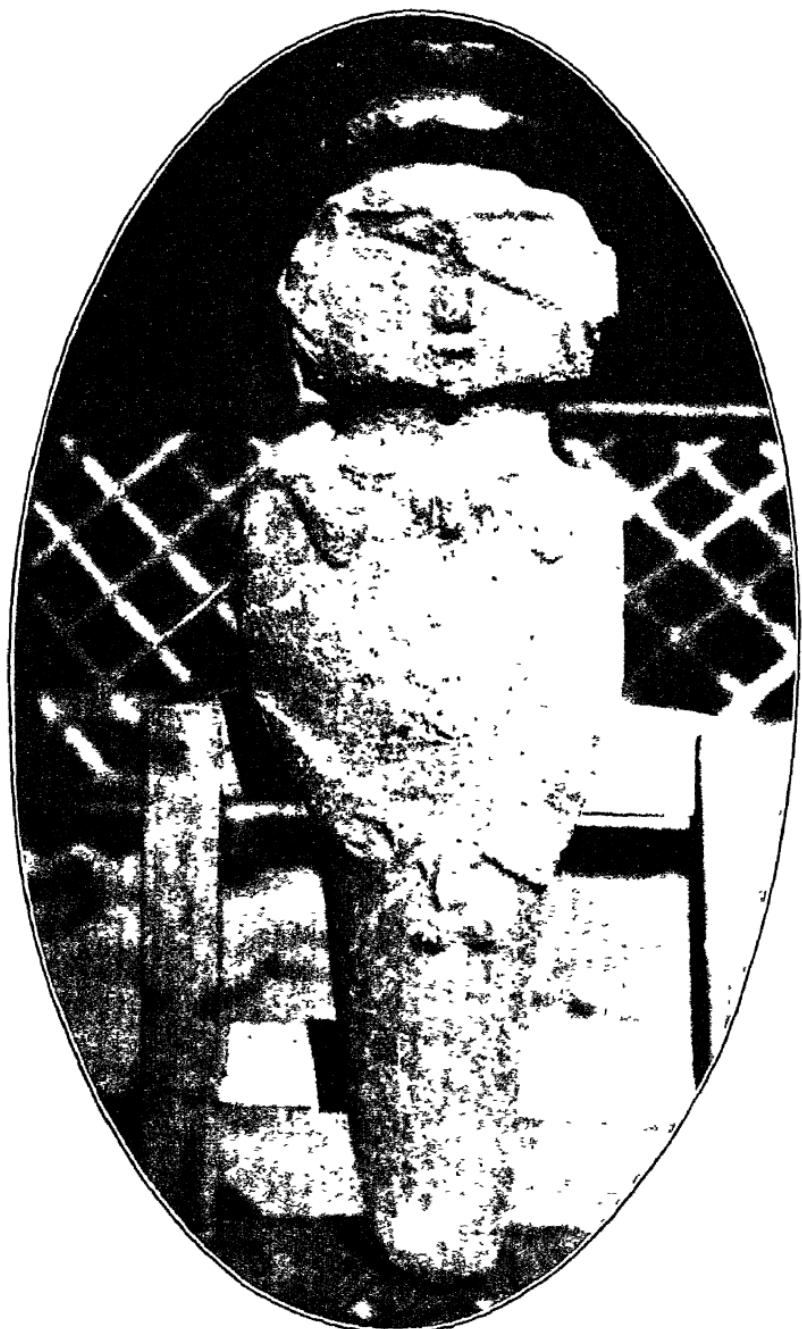
shrubs, with here and there beautiful orchids, and masses of wild honeysuckle, gave a setting of gorgeous color and charged the atmosphere with delicious perfume. Brilliant plumaged parrots and parrakeets screamed discordantly overhead, ugly-looking lizards scurried out of our path, a grass-green snake, coiled around the naked trunk of a tree, high up in the air, swayed his head back and forth in defiance, and an unseen animal crashed away into the jungle as we approached. It was all very wonderful to me and I experienced the strange sensation of having lived through all this before in some far-away, mystic past, just beyond any positive remembrance. It was like a dream that one tries vainly to recall — “a sleep and a forgetting.”

Neither Randall nor I had been in a saddle for over twenty years, until this day, and we hailed with joy the Indian village of Libertad, the first settlement that we reached, when we rode into it at two o’clock in the afternoon; for here it was decided that we should rest ourselves and our horses for an hour, and eat some luncheon.

Libertad is a primitive Indian village, with a single long street. The houses are built of poles bound together with the quamacate plant—a vine-like weed used in place of rope—with a space between each pole, the way corn-cribs are built in the States. This space admits light and air. The roofs are thatched with palm leaves or grass; and some of the houses have sides running only half-way to the roof, with the upper half open. No nails or iron in any form are used in the construction of these buildings. In fact, the people live practically as they did when the white



A ruin of old San Blas



A god of the ancients

man first found them; civilization has had small influence upon their lives. The mule, perhaps, is the only innovation of note since their forefathers owned allegiance to Indian *tzins*, and few of them possess mules.

Naked children ran into the houses as we approached, not because they were ashamed of their nakedness, for they had never worn clothing any more than the pigs and donkeys that shared the houses with them, but because they were startled at the sudden appearance of so many strange *Americanos*.

We engaged an old woman to prepare our luncheon, and while we waited for it to be made ready, sought the shade of a large tree, under which we unpacked our mules and loosed the cinches of our saddles, that the animals might rest while we stretched our legs.

Presently the old señora, our hostess, called us and we filed into her shack — one of the best houses in the town — and seated ourselves around a small rough table. The chairs were of local make, with seats of rushes, which grow plentifully thereabouts. On the table were five tin plates and one tin cup of water. The floor of the cabin was Mother Earth. A litter of pigs grunted contentedly at our feet, and chickens scratched about the clay fireplace, built upon a stone foundation, where the old woman was busily engaged slapping *tortillas* and baking them upon a stone griddle.

The *tortilla* is the ancient Indian bread of Mexico. Its only constituent is Indian corn (maize) which the women soak in lime-water until the kernels are at the point of bursting, then wash it thoroughly until it is free from lime, when they grind it by rubbing it on

a large block of stone, specially cut for the purpose, with a smaller stone which they hold in the hands. The operation looks very much like rubbing clothes on a washboard and is a laborious and tedious one. The lime renders the ground corn dough adhesive, like wheat flour dough, and it is easily patted between the hands into cakes the size and shape of ordinary griddle cakes, which are baked upon a thin stone griddle. Though no salt or leaven is added, fresh tortillas are exceedingly palatable.

The one other food mainstay is *frijoles* — ordinary beans. They are boiled to a mush, and, with a liberal quantity of lard, are warmed, as required, in a flat earthen dish that answers for a frying pan. The very poor people do not always have the luxury of frijoles, and when they do have them, cannot always afford the lard.

We were served with frijoles and tortillas, and an earthen dish of exceedingly hot chilli sauce.

"I have no knife and fork," said Randall when we were seated. "Ask her for them, Gates. She's forgotten them."

"Knives and forks!" exclaimed Gates. "They don't have luxuries like knives and forks here. The only household utensils that this woman has you see before you."

Gates took a tortilla in his fingers, broke it in two, shaped one piece into a scoop, pushed the frijoles on it with the other, and ate. We followed his example.

"Verily, man's wants are few when he does n't know any better," remarked Randall, between efforts to get the beans safely to his mouth.

We ate heartily, taking turns at the cup of water,

and appeased our hunger, which was great — it had to be. But we did not trouble ourselves to look critically into the uncleanliness of the culinary proceedings. A microscopical examination was unnecessary. There are times when it is well for a traveller's peace of mind if he is not too close an observer.

"‘Libertad’ means ‘Liberty,’” observed Randall, as we sat in the shade to smoke while the mozos ate. “I suppose they call the place that because everything is so free and easy here — no restriction on pigs or chickens or mules going into the houses, and youngsters wear clothes or not as they please. But there’s discrimination. Now the *pediculus capititis* is not allowed to pursue its vocation uninterrupted. See that fond mamma chase ‘em?” And with his pipe he indicated a woman searching for ideas in her offspring’s shock of black hair. Her frequent captures furnished us amusement for a while. We soon became accustomed to this, however. In every native village we rode through we saw women and children engaged in the pastime.

We paid at the rate of twelve centavos (six cents) each for our entertainment, cinched up our saddles, and rode away at three o’clock. Below Libertad the soil was a gray loam, and stony. Here it changed to a Venetian red, quite free from stones and more arable. The jungle was not nearly so dense, though there were nearly as many trees.

We passed a good many cattle, all of the long-horn breed, such as we used to have in Texas. The swine were the most disreputable, long-nosed, razor-backed, stunted brutes on earth. I resolved then and there to eat no pork during my stay in Mexico. Dogs were

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numerous about the huts, and many of them were mangy. We saw dogs without a hair on their poor, starved, miserable bodies.

We halted at a spring by the roadside and drank the almost lukewarm water from a cow's horn that Miguel, one of the mozos, carried on his saddle. I inquired what particular use the horn was put to, and at Gates' request Miguel blew a blast upon it. He used it to call his mules.

It was six o'clock when we reached Navarrete, the next town beyond Libertad, where we were to stop for the night. It seemed to me I never was so weary in my life as when we finally halted in front of our hotel, and I was so lame I could scarcely dismount.

Emerson had given us a glowing description of this hotel. He told us it was the best appointed hotel in this part of the country, and here we could rest and enjoy all the luxuries the country afforded. So our expectations were pitched to a high degree. When we viewed the hostelry they fell with a thump. It was nothing more nor less than a shack similar to those we had seen at Libertad, but on a somewhat larger scale. The "dining saloon," as Emerson jocularly called it, was enclosed by a fence, and the entrance was through a gate. A hog was eating its supper of corn under the table, chickens were going to roost just behind it, and two or three parrots perched on a bar under the eaves were swearing volubly in Mexican Spanish — I should think they would have been swearing.

We were cordially greeted by two señoritas — one of them with a round, bright face — and an old señora. Gates gave them an order for supper, while the mozos

piled our saddles and baggage in one end of the room, or rather, shed, for that is the most dignified name it deserves.

A Mexican whose horse was standing outside was finishing his meal. He paid his dues, looked at his six-shooter to see that it was properly loaded, and then took a Winchester rifle from the saddle boot and filled the magazine with cartridges, remarking, as he did so, that he had to ride to Santiago that night, and there were bad men in the country. As he mounted and trotted off, I noticed that he also carried a sword.

One of the señoritas removed a chicken from the roost, killed it, and while the operation of dressing it for our supper was under way, we unbuckled our artillery, threw it on the table, for it was heavy, and strolled up the street to the village store, where they dispensed goods in centavos' worth to big-hatted natives.

Emerson, Randall, and I were the first to return. The round-faced señorita approached me — as the most reputable looking and most dignified member of the party — and asked me something in Spanish. I asked the others what she said. Emerson, like Randall, had learned some Castilian Spanish, and they both agreed that she wanted to know if we would have potatoes for supper. Again I summoned my Spanish vocabulary, and said,

“Si, señorita.”

She looked at me in bewilderment, and when she recovered her breath talked some more. The others decided that after all she might not have asked about potatoes. They would like to have potatoes, and that was what had suggested the idea. They did not know what she wanted, for her Spanish was very bad. In

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the uncertainty I stood by my original position and repeated, "Si, señorita." I could not think of anything else to say. Gates' opportune return relieved the situation. What she wanted to know was whether we would have our eggs boiled or fried.

We took occasion to berate Emerson for telling us things about this hotel that were not in accordance with facts, but he defended himself with the contention that everything he had said was strictly true. "*It is,*" he insisted, "the best hotel in the neighborhood, for it's the only one here."

So we held our peace, swallowed our disappointment, and washed for supper, all using a common wash dish and towel. There was no soap — that is not deemed a necessity in this section of Mexico.

After supper, when some of our party went down to a near-by brook to bathe their feet, the women made quite a hue and cry about it, declaring the alligators would get them; but every one came back unharmed, though we learned afterwards it was a rendezvous for alligators, and that the reptiles were inclined to be sportive.

The bedroom — there was but one to accommodate all comers — had no floor. The canvas cots were arranged in rows, like beds in a hospital ward, each having its canopy of cheese-cloth. We looked carefully under the sheet to drive away any scorpions or centipedes that might be lying in wait for us, and then undressed and crawled in with our guns within reach, for we were strangers in a strange land, and a native had shown us by example that it was a wise precaution to have our arms ready.

Disturbing influences made themselves felt immedi-

ately. Nature distributes her bounties pretty evenly throughout the world. The human population of Mexico is not over-endowed with energy — in fact it is very decidedly under-endowed in that respect — so there is that much animal energy due to the country, and it has, by the law of nature, to manifest itself in some other quarter. We soon learned what quarter.

I was dreaming of mounted Mexicans bristling with arms, of bad men, of gun play and desperate battles, when I awoke with a start. Outside there was racket enough to raise the dead. My first thought was that we were really attacked by desperadoes. Randall confirmed my fears.

"Hist!" he warned, in a stage whisper. "We are attacked! Make ready for the fray!"

I made ready. I grasped my six-shooter, determined to sell my life as dearly as possible. But it turned out to be nothing more formidable than a party of Mexican horsemen demanding entertainment for the balance of the night. A great deal of loud talking was indulged in while they had their supper prepared, and ate it in the adjoining "dining saloon," before they were finally escorted into our chamber, and went to bed in some of the vacant cots.

When things had again quieted down, save for the peaceful snores of the new arrivals, I turned over for another nap. But slumber was not for me. A dog began to howl dismally, then another, and in less than three minutes a thousand dogs were devoting their energies to howling — I wish to be accurate, and I vouch for the accuracy of this statement, for I counted the different-keyed voices of the canine population of Navarrete while I lay and planned dire vengeance

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upon them. Somebody went out and beat one dog into silence, and I should judge, from the sound of the whacks, into insensibility, but it made no appreciable difference in the volume of sound. Then the roosters began to crow in the dining saloon, mules and donkeys in untold numbers joined the chorus with their heart-rending brays, cattle bellowed, we heard our mozos feeding our animals, and we arose. It was not daylight yet, but we had a burning desire to get away and enjoy new experiences. These were growing monotonous.

In the dim candlelight, Emerson reached for one of his shoes and a lizard, fully a foot long, jumped out of it and scurried off into the darkness. After that we shook out our shoes and clothes before we ventured into them.

Breakfast was eaten before daybreak, and with dawn we mounted and took the trail to Santiago Ixcuintla.

CHAPTER IV

A LAND OF PROMISE

THE village of Navarrete has a population of five hundred people. It is the centre of the Hacienda Navarrete, a hacienda containing upwards of two hundred and ten thousand acres, and owned by a native Mexican to whom it has probably been handed down through generations. It is hard for one to realize the immense territory embraced within the boundaries of this single ranch — three hundred and twenty-eight square miles, or an area equal to nearly one-third of the State of Rhode Island. It is only an example, however, of many of the large landed estates of the Republic — some much larger, some smaller.

The ranch house is the only building of substantial construction on the place, and is of stone and mortar. All the others are the flimsy, thatched-roofed huts typical of the *tierra caliente*. Libertad and several other small Indian villages are situated upon the Hacienda Navarrete, and the people who inhabit them are little better than serfs.

The soil is rich, deep, and practically inexhaustible. Fertilization is never thought of, and is unnecessary. On the various elevations almost anything can be grown, from bananas to corn, coffee, and rubber. Pineapples grow wild, limes, lemons, and oranges are abundant in the uncultivated state. Corn yields two

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and sometimes three crops a year without irrigation, and nearly every stalk bears two large ears. We saw some remarkable fields of the ripening grain.

Tobacco, corn, beans, and a little cotton are practically the only crops, however, to which any attention whatever is given on this hacienda, and the methods of planting and harvesting are the crudest. None of the modes of modern scientific farming are known. The forked stick of ancient Egypt is the plough, the machete is the cultivator. Hundreds of pack mules carry the produce to market, but so little of the land is cleared and under cultivation that the tilled portion is hardly noticeable. The greater part is overrun with a rank, wild growth, through which long-horned cattle range and are guarded from wild beasts by Indian herdsmen.

Land is a heritage and not a commodity to the Mexican, and unless he is pressed for funds it is not usual for him to offer his estate for sale. Of course, a liberal offer and the glitter of gold are always strong arguments which go far to overcome his prejudices. At the present time from two to four pesos an acre, to include appurtenances, is deemed an average valuation, but it is possible to buy land only in large parcels of many thousand acres at that rate.

They told us that two years before our visit the Hacienda Navarrete was offered for sale for five hundred thousand pesos. Now the asking price — unless it has advanced again — is one million pesos. This hacienda pays its owner an income of fifty thousand pesos a year, and he gives it absolutely no personal attention, leaving every detail to his head mozo. The mozo sends the cattle and produce to market,



Pack train on the road to Tepic



"Stately palms and gigantic ferns lined our trail."

and turns over the proceeds to his master, who does not look at the accounts, and cares nothing about them so long as his expensive habits and appetites are satisfied. A gentleman of my acquaintance asked him once if he did not think a large part of the proceeds from the hacienda were stolen.

"Oh, no," he answered, "there is no occasion for my head mozo to steal. I pay him liberally for managing the hacienda."

"How much do you pay him?" was asked.

"Forty-five pesos a month," was the reply.

Forty-five pesos! Twenty-two and a half dollars a month to manage that stupendous estate! I wonder if that mozo steals? Perhaps not; but honesty, under the most favorable circumstances, is not one of the shining virtues of a Mexican mozo.

Real estate titles in Mexico were formerly much involved and exceedingly unstable. To cure defects, President Diaz, a few years ago, issued an edict requiring that all titles be submitted for confirmation by himself or his authorized deputies. This confirmation amounted to a new grant from the Government, which was unassailable for any cause. Titles not submitted within a specified period reverted to the Government, and the land covered by them became a part of the public domain, to be thrown open to denunciation. Some of the more ignorant hacienda owners gave no attention whatever to the edict, and theoretically they lost their properties, to which they presumably had defective titles. In conformance with the terms of the edict these estates were at once listed as government lands, and offered by the land office for sale.

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An acquaintance whom I met in the course of my travels in Mexico told me that he purchased from the Government a tract of these lands approximating fifty thousand acres. When he went to claim his property, he found it in possession of an old Mexican who claimed ownership of it, in spite of the government grant. The Mexican had lived upon it all his life, and it had been in his family for many generations. It was stocked with several thousand head of cattle, under the charge of cowboys who carried revolvers. The Mexican and his grown sons also carried revolvers. When my acquaintance demanded possession, the Mexican informed him that the land was his, title or no title, government grant or no grant, and he intended to hold it against all comers,—that he and his men would shoot anybody found trespassing upon it.

The purchaser discreetly retired to the land office, and demanded to be put into possession of the property for which he had paid. Here he was told that the Government had undertaken only to sell him a sound title, and not to put him into possession. Such a title had been delivered to him, and the Government could not in addition attempt to dispossess trespassers. He must do that himself, but he must not kill anybody in doing it. Perhaps the courts could help him. Now a man may be born, live out a long and eventful career, die and be forgotten, while the machinery of the courts is getting ready to be put into motion. The result is, my acquaintance is the owner of fifty thousand acres of good Mexican land that he cannot set his foot upon, and of which he may never get control.

I cite this as a warning to would-be investors. It

is a wise precaution to first learn, before accepting land office titles, whether the land one wishes to buy is free from the encumbrance of belligerent claimants in possession. My acquaintance did not take this precaution. He purchased in good faith, believing he was getting a wild and unoccupied tract.

I was very stiff indeed when I mounted my horse at Navarrete, but a few miles at a smart trot limbered up my joints, and as I became accustomed to the saddle and motion, enjoyed keenly the wild new country through which we were riding. Our trail was in excellent condition, but finally took to the shores of a creek, crossing and recrossing it, and we were forced to make frequent circuits through thick undergrowth to avoid quagmires.

During the morning two or three small Indian villages were passed, where naked children watched us curiously, and women grinding corn stopped their work to gaze. Near each village several scantily clad women, sitting upon rocks at the edge of the creek, were busily engaged in rubbing clothes on flat stones, and pounding the garments vigorously against bowlders. This is the Mexican laundry, and every day is wash day. I often wondered what they did with the garments after they were washed, for no one that we saw appeared to be seriously addicted to the habit of wearing clean clothing.

There were hot springs, said to possess curative qualities, not far from one of the settlements. Aguas Calientes (hot water) the village was called. One finds a great many hot springs in the course of a journey through Mexico, and wherever there is a settlement near one of them, it is sure to be called "Aguas

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Calientes." I visited at least a half-dozen "Aguas Calientes" in the course of my travels, and I am sure I overlooked several by not inquiring their names.

In one of the villages, we reined up at a shack where fruit was sold, and purchased some oranges and sugar-cane. The green cane is chewed by the natives for the sap, and among the peon population takes the place of candy. Gates said we would surely have calentura if we ate it, but we had been warned against bananas, oranges, milk, water, and almost everything edible and drinkable by our friends on the *San Jose* and others who had travelled in Mexico, until there was little or nothing left that did not seem to lay one open to the fever. For my part, I disregarded all their warnings, and ate the sugar-cane and anything else my appetite craved that came within my reach. The sugar-cane produced here is of the finest quality, heavily charged with sugar, and delicious.

Since leaving San Blas we had observed ugly, ghoulish vultures everywhere feeding upon refuse and carrion. They were exceedingly tame. Hogs and vultures combine to keep Mexico in something like a sanitary condition. The people themselves pay absolutely no regard to sanitation, and if it were not for the vultures and the hogs the country would be in a constant state of pestilence through the unbelievably filthy customs of the natives.

Now and again pack trains crowded us off the trail, the mules heavily laden with merchandise for the Santiago Ixcuintla shops, or with bales of cotton destined for the mills at Tepic City, there to be manufactured into the gaudy colored *zerares*, or the coarse cotton fabrics worn by the peons.

Once we met a muleteer with three or four mules deliberately proceeding with the Santiago Ixcuintla mail, *en route* to the railroad at San Marcos. During the season of high water in the rivers, when the stage does not run, it is the custom to let the mail accumulate at Santiago Ixcuintla, as it comes in from day to day from the surrounding villages and towns, until the officials of the post-office deem it worth while to make up a pack train and despatch it.

We gave all the pack trains we met a wide berth, for pack mules turn neither to the right nor to the left for man or beast, but demand a clear right of way: and unless you wish to have your legs well scraped against their packs, you will be discreet and recognize their claims.

But the most interesting and picturesque, perhaps, of all the travellers we met were the members of a little Indian family in the act of moving. It was like a glimpse of the Orient. Their household goods and all their worldly possessions were loaded upon a burro, the mother with an infant in her arms perched on top, while the father walked by the side. They reminded me of the picture we are so familiar with of the flight of Joseph and Mary with the child Jesus.

The soil of the whole country through which we were passing was rich and arable, and capable of being turned into a veritable paradise. This is on the line of the extension of the Southern Pacific Railroad, now under construction, and I could not but picture to myself the wonderful transformation that is in store for it during the next decade, when American capital, which is sure to follow the opening of the railway, takes hold of it.

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What opportunities for investment it offers! And now is the time to strike. Investors who take hold of this land now, while it can be had at a merely nominal price, will reap fortunes in colonization later. The prices will advance by leaps and bounds with the opening of the railroad. Then will come the transformation of jungles into orange groves, fields of grain will spring up, rich harvests of bananas, pineapples, and the hundred other profitable crops the land is capable of will be gathered, and from the near-by hills will come as fine coffee as tropical America can grow.

Perhaps this is too optimistic a view to take, but we shall see. I have travelled from seaboard to seaboard of the United States, but have seen nothing to compare with this land in natural resources. There is plenty of water for irrigation, but irrigation is not absolutely necessary in this section of Tepic Territory.

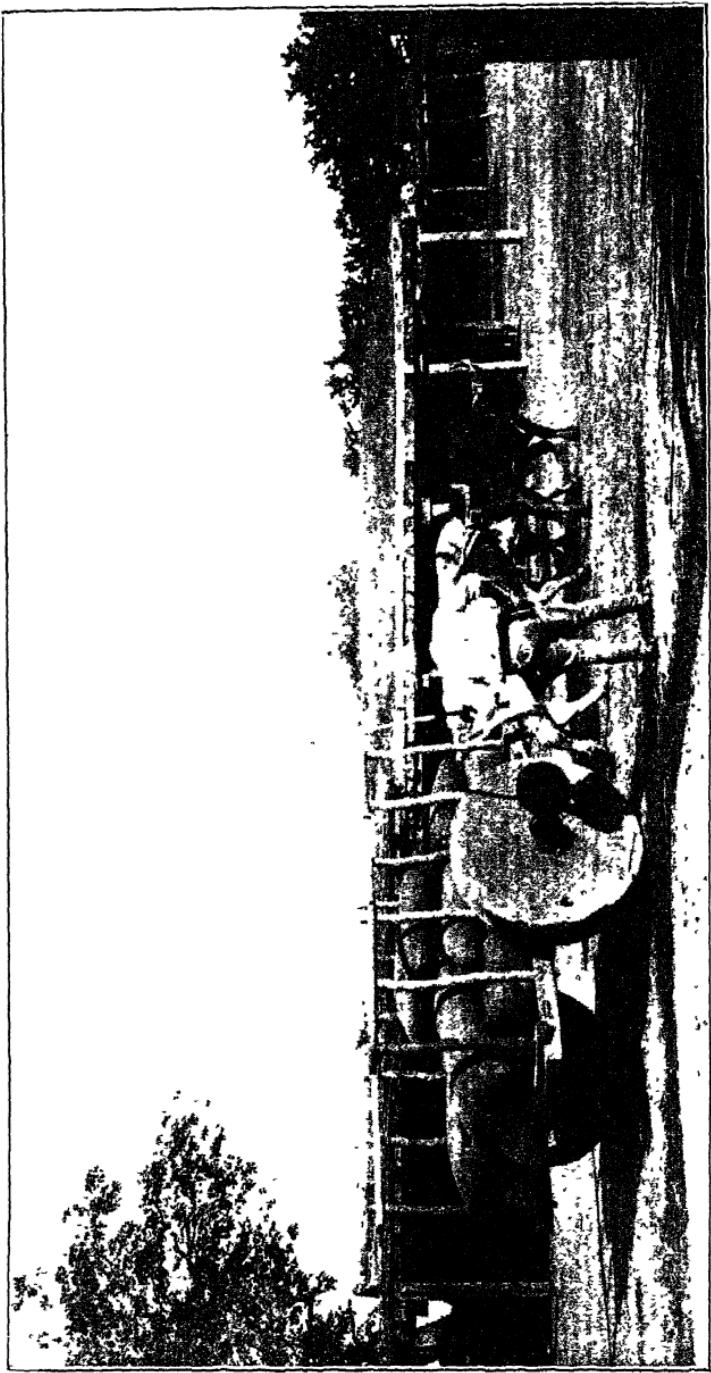
We are now in the region which the armed rider at Navarrete had referred to the previous evening as a likely place for hold-ups. Emerson loosened the flap of his holster, for he had considerable currency about him and wished to be prepared for an emergency.

"Are the natives here good with guns?" I inquired.

"Oh, no," said he, "not generally. They are about like the Don that used to own our hacienda. When I came down here first to look over the property he was showing me around one day when a dog insisted on following us. The Don did n't want its company and tried to drive it back, but it would n't go. He got in a rage at it, and drew his gun. The animal was close to us — not over five or six paces away — and I thought he'd kill it the first crack, but he did n't.



Waiting for the ferry at La Presa



A typical wooden cart (each wheel is made from a log segment, the pole is mahogany, and no iron whatever is used in construction)

He emptied his gun at it and never hit it. He was so angry at missing that he threw the gun at it, and did n't even hit it with that. Then he went up and kicked the dog and sent it away whining. And the poor brute had been considerate enough to stand still and give the fellow every chance! I don't think they're much with the gun."

Presently we came to a collection of Indian huts on the bank of the Santiago River, which we were informed was the village of La Presa; and just across the river lay the important town of Santiago Ixcuintla. Here Mr. Fritz Kaiser, bookkeeper for the Hacienda San Nicolás, joined our party.

A group of picturesque natives, a pack train, and a cumbrous cart of prehistoric design, drawn by four oxen and looking as though it had been transplanted from Egypt, were waiting to be carried across the river on the *batangas* — a ferry-boat constructed of two dugout canoes supporting a platform, with a railing built around the platform.

The ox cart brings to my mind an article on Mexico that appeared in one of the popular magazines two or three years ago. An illustration accompanying the article was a photograph of one of these ancient carts. The author, a woman, described it as a type of vehicle "now obsolete in Mexico," and stated that the photograph illustrating her article was of the only cart of the kind remaining in the Republic. "This cart was rescued," the article stated, "by the Mexican Government to become part of an anthropological exhibit in one of the museums." According to my observation, it is about the only type of vehicle to be seen in Mexico outside of the larger towns and

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cities. You see these carts everywhere, with ponderous wheels cut from a single segment of tree, with ebony axles and mahogany poles, and not a scrap of iron used in the construction.

It was noon when we led our horses and mules upon the flimsy batangas, which was propelled across the shallow river by men with long poles, and on the other side proceeded at once to the Hotel Sur Pacifico. We had been in the saddle for six consecutive hours, and here we were to rest ourselves and our tired animals, and get a glimpse of the quaint old town, before taking the trail again after the *siesta* hour.

CHAPTER V

THE SANTIAGO RIVER TRAIL

THE boniface of the Hotel Sur Pacifico came personally to receive us as we rode through the high doorway of his hotel into the patio. He told us he was quite overcome by the honor of entertaining so many distinguished guests. He would do his best to be worthy of that honor. Would the Americanos make themselves comfortable? The house and all it held was theirs. I do not know how much more than the regular rate for entertainment he charged us for bestowing that "honor" upon him. In Eastern Mexico along the lines of tourist travel all Americans are looked upon as a happy combination of "easy mark" and "bloated plutocrat," especially created for the enrichment of native merchants and hotel-keepers, and prices always advance temporarily when a "gringo" appears. This custom has crept even into the isolated towns of the western slope, where the only Americans ever seen are occasional miners or prospectors.

To the average Mexican all Americans are "gringos." They are too polite to call you a gringo to your face, but amongst themselves it is the term generally used in referring to Americans. It is a term of disrespect, just as "greaser," when applied to a Mexican, is an opprobrious term. "Gringo" had its origin during

our war with Mexico in 1847. Bobby Burns' song, with the chorus, —

“Green grow the rashes, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent among the lasses, O,”

was very popular then, and our soldiers in Mexico sang it on the march and on nearly every occasion. “Green grow” sounded like “gringo” to the Mexicans, unacquainted with English, and they quickly learned to speak of the American soldiers as “gringos,” and thenceforth this appellation has been attached to all Americans.*

A string band serenaded with soft, sweet music a newly married couple, who were at dinner in the patio, and while we ate in the dining-room on the opposite side of the patio, we enjoyed the luxury of the music. Mexicans are natural musicians, and this band played well.

We dined leisurely and then wandered down to the plaza and market-place, which was similar to that at San Blas, though on a larger scale. Santiago Ixcuintla has a population of four thousand persons. Situated upon the Santiago River, it has considerable traffic and trading by canoe, and is a distributing point for merchandise for a wide territory. Mule trains, laden with produce, are constantly moving in and out, and

*There are many theories as to the origin of the word “gringos” as applied to Americans. This one seems to me the most reasonable. A gentleman, however, who has travelled extensively in South America, and has endeavored to trace the word to its beginning, assures me Americans were known as “gringos” in various South American countries long before our war with Mexico. D. W.

the town has an air of prosperity and activity. Three or four American miners make their headquarters here; otherwise the population is Mexican. As in most of the larger towns and cities, the principal business men are strongly of Spanish type, while the peons and mass of the population are Indian.

Santiago Ixcuintla is built upon a hillside, rising abruptly from the river, and presents a picturesque appearance from a distance; but upon entering the town one finds the streets to be narrow and ill-kempt, as is so often the case in Mexico.

One of the most interesting street objects to the stranger is the water-carrier, who is to be seen in every town in Western Mexico. With two or three mules, each carrying a bent-wood pannier in which are balanced, two on either side of the animal, red clay water jugs, the carrier, perched upon the jugs on one of the mules, jogs from house to house selling the water. There are no city water works, and there is no fire department. These are modern innovations unknown in Western Mexican towns. But, generally speaking, fire departments are unnecessary, for the better classes of houses are not very combustible, being constructed of stone or brick and mortar, and the poorer houses are not worth saving should fire break out amongst them.

All of the better class of buildings have a patio and are usually one story high, though occasionally two stories. The windows opening upon the street are barred with heavy iron, like the windows of a prison, while second-story windows usually have small balconies in front of them.

The bars on the street windows are not to keep

people in, but to keep them out. Every one told us that nothing was safe anywhere from thievery, though I did not lose one single article while in Mexico. I heeded the warnings that were constantly sounded in my ears, however, and kept everything of mine, that might be filched, chained down or constantly under my eye, and perhaps that is why none of my goods and chattels was stolen. I heard of cases where beds were robbed of blankets by means of poles, with hooks attached, which were inserted between the window bars. It is the custom of employers to search their servants for concealed articles whenever the latter leave the premises. Guns, ammunition, jewelry, and fancy articles are taken in preference to money.

Shortly after two o'clock the mozos brought our horses around, and without waiting for the pack mules to accompany us, we rode out of town, on a wide road that leads to the eastward. For a short distance the country was comparatively open, and cultivated fields lay about us. But soon a turn took us into a pasture, and our King's Highway dropped down to a simple bridle path and finally became a broken trail, ascending the valley of the Santiago Rio.

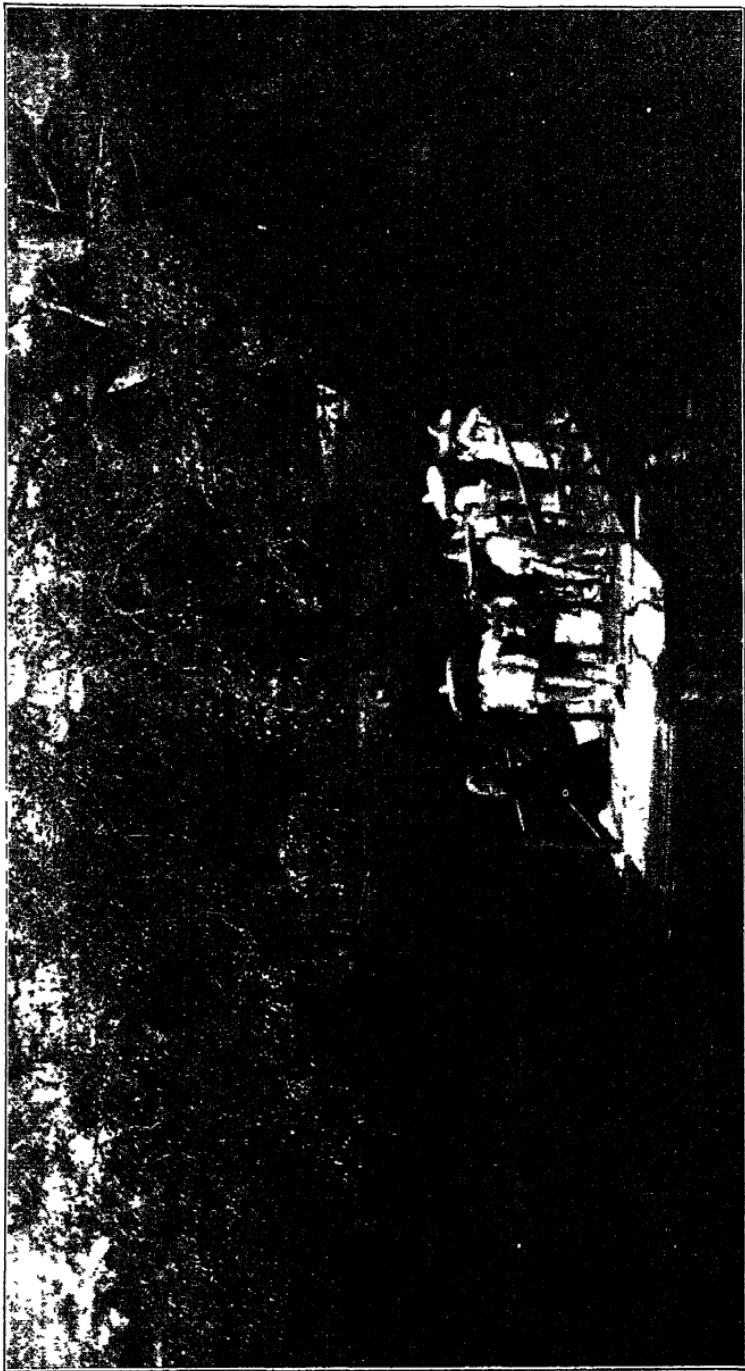
We still had fifteen miles to ride before reaching the Hacienda San Nicolás. Fifteen miles is not far when one has a good road, and one's horses are fresh; but with tired horses, on a trail that runs through mud and over rocks, in a broiling sun, when one is weary and sore in every limb from unaccustomed riding, it seems an endless journey.

Sometimes we rode close to the bank, and had magnificent views of the river, reaching far away to the mountains. Huge alligators sunned themselves



A water pedler

The ferry at the Caimonaro



on the sandy beaches across the stream. Many of these reptiles were ten or twelve feet long. The large ones are a menace to calves, which come down with the herds to drink.

During the rainy season the Rio Santiago sometimes breaks over its banks and inundates large sections of the lower elevations of the valley. It is seven hundred miles in length, and, next to the Fuerte River of Sinaloa, which is not so long but carries a greater volume of water, is the largest and most important river wholly within the boundaries of Mexico. With its main source in the mountains of Northern Guanajuato, it flows through the beautiful Lake Chapala, crosses the State of Jalisco, breaks out through the canyons of the Sierra de Nayarit, and fertilizes and waters a long stretch of the rich bottom lands of Tepic Territory before it finally reaches the sea at San Blas. Though it is wide and generally shallow below the mountains, during five or six months of the year flat-bottomed boats and canoes of from three to five tons burden may navigate it to a distance seventy miles from its mouth. The soil of the valley is a rich, dark loam, and where the river had undermined its banks at the high points we could see a depth of from fifteen to twenty feet above the clay or gravel substrata.

The vegetation was dense, and to our unfamiliar eyes strange and wonderful. Trees were festooned with innumerable flowering vines, brilliant in color, and of fragrant perfume, which grew in amazing profusion. A thousand varieties of trees and plants that we did not recognize closed in our narrow trail, and in and out amongst them darted gorgeous-colored

parrots, filling the air with their discordant screams, in noisy protest against our invasion of their retreat. Toward sunset we crossed two rocky ridges, and congratulated ourselves upon having them behind us before darkness came.

Randall's mount, a rather poor one and somewhat advanced in years, declined finally to keep pace with the others, in spite of applied inspiration in the shape of spurs and quirt. It had a gait, too, that was not conducive to reposedful meditations on the part of the rider. Finally Randall dropped out of sight, and Gates and I turned back to meet him. When we saw him at last, working every inch of his way, Gates comforted us with the assurance that it was "only five miles farther to the ranch house," and that we were already on the Hacienda San Nicolás.

Not far beyond this point a small river known as the Caimonaro (place for alligators) empties its waters into the Santiago. It was too deep to ford, and we were ferried across upon a catamaran by an Indian belonging to a settlement upon the farther shore.

Here we met an Indian runner returning from the hacienda house, whom Kaiser had despatched from Santiago upon our arrival there, to advise the people that we were coming. In a rough country, or where the trails are bad, these runners will far outdistance a mounted man. Later in my journey I saw them in the high sierras. They have remarkable endurance, and seem tireless. They are the descendants of those men who, with telegraphic rapidity, kept Montezuma so well informed of the happenings throughout his domain, and through whom he so quickly learned of the landing of the Spaniards at Vera Cruz.

The sun was setting when we met the runner, and in an incredibly short time darkness was upon us. I had read a great deal of the sunsets of Mexico, and while some of them were of entrancing beauty, they disappointed me. The refraction was of too brief duration, with scarcely any time perceptible between the going of the sun and the coming of darkness. They do not compare with the glory and wonder of color that I have witnessed amongst the lakes of the interior plateau of Labrador. But no sunsets in the world can compare with those of Labrador, where they reach the very height of color perfection, with long duration.

Through mud and mire, through dark bits of woods and across arroyos, we picked our way in the darkness, until finally Gates, who was ahead, called back to us,

"See that light? That's the house."

It was welcome, indeed. Weary with our two days in the saddle under a burning sun, the cheery light was like a harbor beacon to a sailor entering port after a tempestuous voyage. As we rode through the high doorway and dismounted, a swarthy native youth, clad in white, was setting a table, spread with a snowy cloth, on the patio veranda, a delicious odor of coffee and savory cooking pervaded the atmosphere, and a feeling of contentment and rest stole over us.

The luxury of a bath, an excellent meal, a cigar, and an hour's pleasant chat, followed by a comfortable bed, stamped the Hacienda San Nicolás upon our memory as a haven of rest and good cheer.

CHAPTER VI

A LOOK AT THE INDIANS

THE following morning I had opportunity to explore at leisure our immediate surroundings.

The house was built after the prevailing style of architecture, forming a hollow square, with a patio in the centre. It had but one story, and was constructed of brick and adobe, the walls ponderously thick, the roof of tile, the floors of red brick, the door to the patio massive white mahogany and fastened with iron bars. Loopholes, now plugged with mortar, formerly punctured the outer walls, and gave evidence that the building was originally designed for defence against Indians or brigands. The rooms opened upon a covered veranda that faced the patio, which was planted with trees and shrubs. On the east side of the patio lay the kitchen, the servants' quarters, and the hacienda store, on the north was the main entrance, and on the west a door leading to a corral.

Behind the house was a gently rising hill, and along its base, adjoining the enclosed grounds, stretched a short street lined with the miserable Indian huts that we had become so familiar with on our inland journey. Women were busily engaged in grinding corn, or, with big clay bottles balanced upon their heads, were bringing home the day's supply of water from a neighboring brook. These bottles held from three to five gallons each, and were carried without the aid of the hands to balance them.

Men lounged about in white cotton pajamas, and most of them wore the *zerrape* wrapped around their shoulders, with one end thrown back over the left shoulder. The women wore a scarf (*reboso*) over their heads, crossed under the chin, and the ends thrown back over their shoulders. Both the women and men were barefooted, or wore only sandals, which is the prevailing fashion in footgear among the peon class. The men's white pajamas were all remarkably clean. I might say that they were cleaner and neater in appearance here than in any other part of Mexico I visited. The women were not so clean, and were anything but good-looking. Nowhere in Mexico did our observations bear out the statement of one author, who says of them:

"There are thousands of pretty faces of richest color, long lashes, soft and downy ear locks, black as jet, and with long, inky black hair. Under the *tapalo* or *reboso* is many a Venus."

They have the color of most Indians, and the hair is not soft and downy, but coarse and stiff. No enchanting ones did we see under a *tapalo* or *reboso*, and we finally resigned the expectation of finding beauty enshrined there as hopeless. The Venuses are beings of the author's fancy and not of reality.

There were two or three distinct types to be seen amongst the people of the village. None of them, I might say, resembled our Indians of the North. One type particularly suggested the Semitic. Amongst these, in the case of the men, the hair and beard were often curly, though always coarse and black. It is possible, though not probable, this characteristic was introduced by Spanish Hebrews. Not probable, be-

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cause in the early days of Spanish occupancy Hebrews did not penetrate to these inland points, and they have never at any time since settled amongst the Indians of Western Mexico. To-day there are a very few in Tepic City, but none nearer.

Nearly every one appeared to be suffering from *calentura* (malarial fever), and, indeed, it is a wonder these peons do not have a continual scourge of typhoid and yellow fever as well, in view of the unsanitary conditions that exist, and their utter disregard of the simplest precautions. Poor little youngsters were crying with fever, and some of them lay upon the ground too sick to move, as we stepped over them. I saw one or two that I thought at first were dead. They get little or no care, and a great many of them do die, and are apparently forgotten at once by the parents. But then there are plenty of new ones that come to take the places of those that die.

Eighty-seven per cent of the children born in Mexico, I was informed upon good authority, are illegitimate. It would be quite impossible for the people of any land to have less regard for sexual purity than have the peons of Mexico. No obloquy is attached to the parents of illegitimate children and no shame follows children born out of wedlock. The conditions are these: The Mexican Government looks upon marriage as a purely civil contract, and, for reasons deemed sufficient, declines to recognize as binding any ceremony performed by others than duly authorized officials. The Church teaches her people, on the other hand, that marriage is a religious union, and can therefore be consummated only by a priest of the Church; that the civil marriage alone is not binding and entails

no moral obligation. The priest charges six pesos or more to perform the ceremony, the Government six, and as twelve pesos is an amount that most peons never in their life possess at any one time, and as neither form of marriage is in itself considered sufficient, the majority do not get married at all, but the men and women simply go and live together. This condition blots out any sense of moral obligation, and the result is inevitable — moral and physical degeneracy.

A European gentleman of long residence in Mexico, in discussing the subject with me, declared that ninety-five per cent of the people are diseased to a greater or less extent. I repeated this to one of the leading physicians of Mexico, and he promptly stamped it as a gross libel upon the country. "No," said he, "only *eighty* per cent are afflicted. That, of course," he added, "is a conservative estimate. There may be a few more, but not ninety-five per cent." I should say, however, that even this reduced estimate appears excessive. Physicians are often too prone to limit their observations to that portion of a population who require their assistance, and it is natural, therefore, for them to overestimate the prevalence of disease.

There is every reason to believe that the Aztecs were a virtuous and industrious people before the advent of the Spaniard. True, they had their bloody sacrifices, but were they more bloody, or a hundredth part so inhuman in their execution as the tortures of the Inquisition? Were the Aztecs really not farther advanced in civilization than the Christian conquerors who, by force of sword and blood, placed the Cross in the temple of the deposed Quetzalcoatl? When I

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was in Mexico City an educated and patriotic Mexican, in whose veins flows Aztec blood, remarked of the Spaniards: "They robbed us of our land and our homes, they debauched our women, they murdered our sons, they taught us to be lazy and proud; and all they left us as a heritage was the priest, the prostitute, and the bull ring." President Diaz and his compatriots, who are establishing schools and trying to educate the populace to better things, are doing nobly, but they have a Herculean task to perform, with the influence of nearly three centuries of occupation by Spanish adventurers to overcome.

As I passed down from the settlement, upon a path leading under the rear wall of the hacienda buildings, I took a snapshot of two of the women water-carriers. I had to do this by stealth, concealing myself behind a clump of bushes, for nearly all of the Indians feared my camera as a new sort of gun. On this occasion the women saw me just as I pressed the button, and they all but dropped their water jugs, gaining their equilibrium only when they saw me train the camera in another direction.

Several horses and mules were enclosed in the corral, and as I walked amongst them I was struck by their docility. From what I had read of Mexican steeds I had always supposed they were high-strung, vicious beasts, but my observation of them here and everywhere else disabused me of this conception. On the contrary, they are the best behaved, most patient, enduring, and well trained of animals. All of the horses are good cow chasers, and are bridle wise—that is, answer the touch of the rein upon the neck.

The people are universally splendid riders. They



Water carriers

(more than half from a single loy, capable of carrying six passengers and



carry themselves gracefully, like our cowboys of the Western States, and you never see amongst them the bob-up-and-down, ridiculous, riding academy style that is so prevalent in our city parks.

Among the fowls were some beautiful domesticated pheasants (pheasants are quite plentiful here in the wild state). They mixed with the hens, and that they had inbred with them, some ludicrous looking half-breeds, with the body of the hen and head and long tail of the pheasant, bore evidence. The pheasants were tame, and had no inclination apparently to revert to the wild state.

A white-tailed deer — a spiked buck — attracted my attention by giving me a poke in the back with his horns. I gave him the petting he demanded, and a handful of salt, which he ate with avidity. He came on the patio veranda later, when we were at table, and demanded more salt. White-tailed deer are numerous. This one was found when a little fawn and was raised by Gates and Kaiser. On several occasions he was seen trying to induce does, whose acquaintance he made in the bush, to accompany him home; but their timidity always got the better of them when they neared the house, and to the disgust of Blanco, the tame buck, they fled to cover. Sometimes he met other bucks back in the wilderness, and that battles royal were the result his numerous wounds bore ample proof.

A few days after this on which I made Blanco's acquaintance, he came to an untimely end through his absolute faith in the friendship of men. Kaiser was at home alone at the time, and had laid out some onion sets to put in the ground. Blanco happen-

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ing around, and believing that all things good were intended for his pleasure, consumed the onion sets. Unfortunately for Blanco, Kaiser came upon him as he was devouring the last set with unfeigned relish, and in a fit of anger drew his gun and killed instantly the pet deer which he had fed on a bottle when it was a helpless baby fawn, and which had learned to love and confide in him and look to him for protection. But it was just as well, perhaps, for Blanco was reaching an age when he would have been a menace to the lives of children.

I saw several of these white-tailed deer later, at mountain cabins, where they were the pets and the autocrats of the house. Usually they were unrestrained and at liberty to roam at will, but occasionally one was chained to keep it safe from dogs, or from attacking inoffensive people.

After dinner our horses were brought around and we rode forth under the guidance of the managing mozo of the hacienda, Serapio Ballestrado by name, to inspect the adjacent rubber forests. Serapio was a splendid specimen of physical perfection, self-reliant, and, in marked contrast to the average Mexican, active and aggressive. We soon became friends, and I learned that he had spent several years in California and, as a cowboy, in Texas. During his residence in the United States he had acquired a fair speaking knowledge of the English language, and this enabled me to converse with him and glean from him a good deal of information about Mexico and the people, which I should otherwise have been denied.

Besides being managing mozo of the Hacienda San Nicolás, Serapio is a sort of judicial officer for the sur-

rounding territory, where he is looked upon by the peons as a chief. His self-reliance and decisive manner are doubtless hereditary, and have been handed down to him with his caste from the days before the Conquest. Here, in these more or less remote sections of the country, the caste of those days has not been altogether eliminated. When I looked at him I involuntarily thought of the patriots who fought so hopelessly and vainly by the side of Guatemozin for the preservation of their freedom and their homes, and I easily pictured him as one of them. Miguel, one of the mozos who met us at San Blas, is his son.

Out through fields of para grass, wild pineapple, and corn-fields with weeds higher than the horses' backs, and flowers blooming everywhere, we rode into the forest for a short distance, Serapio using his machete to cut away branches that blocked the trail. Here were many large rubber trees tapped for the gum, and several hundred young trees recently set out and under cultivation. Rubber culture in this section is in its infancy, and whether it will pay or not I cannot say. Personally I am sceptical. However, the old trees yield a good quality of rubber, and are well worth attention.

Some of the other forest trees noticed were the *zebas*, a large tree, of quick growth, but punky and of no commercial value; the *amata*, or white mahogany, not plentiful; a very few *tampaziran*, or rosewood; *tipa-gopta*, numerous and large; the *guanacastl*, a very large tree, of quick growth, utilized by the natives for making dugout canoes; and the *capoma*, also numerous, a large tree, the leaves and berries of which are greedily eaten by cattle.

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We made a swing out of the timber into the open range, where long-horned cattle grazed, and through pineapple and ripened corn-fields down to the Caimonaro, hoping that here we might meet the canoes from San Blas that were to bring up our surplus baggage and Emerson's pigs; but they were not there and did not come until late at night.

At the Caimonaro a native carpenter was engaged in transforming immense logs of the *guanacastil* tree into huge dugout canoes. I measured one of these partly finished canoes, and found it to be thirty-eight feet long, with a beam of five feet two inches, and Serapio told me it would carry twenty cargoes, that is, as much as twenty mules could pack. A mule's cargo is three hundred pounds.

The Government demands a tax on every canoe or craft of any description floated upon the inland waterways. If you own a small canoe for pleasure or any purpose, and use it, you must pay your tax or have your boat confiscated. This tax is not levied for the purpose of aiding to pay the expense of keeping the streams in a navigable condition, or even remotely applied to their betterment. Very few of the Mexican rivers are navigable, except for canoes and flat-bottomed boats, and the Government expends no money on them. The tax is simply a means of obtaining revenue, and no possible means of securing revenue is overlooked in Mexico. If you want beef, and butcher one of your own steers, you must pay a tax for the privilege of doing it.

Serapio placed the carpenter who was working on the canoe, and a group of children, in position for me to photograph. Some of the children were naked,

but we had them draped for the occasion. In the group I noticed two or three of the youngsters who bore unmistakable marks of foreign influence, and was told that they were the children of a German who had spent some time in the neighborhood some years before. One of the little girls manifested considerable interest in me, and prattled to me fearlessly. I gave her a few centavos in appreciation, and though neither could understand the other, we immediately became great friends.

On our return to the ranch house in the evening we passed near a hill standing a little way back of the river. Emerson, pointing to it, remarked:

"That is the famous Treasure Hill, or, as the natives call it, 'El Cerro del Tesoro.' There's an interesting legend about it, and lately some remarkable revelations tend to confirm the truth of the story. It's a tale of the Spanish occupation, the gold hunters, the revolution, and murder, with a present-day attempt to unravel the truth of it. Would you like to hear it?"

Of course I wanted to hear it, and Emerson related it to me as we rode along.

CHAPTER VII

THE MYSTERY OF TREASURE HILL

“**W**HEN the Conquest was at an end,” began Emerson, “and every chief and tribe that had not been put to the sword was bowed by the fear of it in humble submission before the Cross, with a broken heart in each man’s breast and chains of slavery upon his ankles, when peace and tranquillity at last reigned in Mexico, and the Spanish adventurer found himself free to roam without danger of molestation, he turned his attention to the search for gold. He scoured every mountain fastness, every crag and canyon, every river bed and isolated hill of the Cordilleras, and even the lower plains, for hidden deposits of the precious metal. From San Blas he swept up the valley of the Santiago River, and at Treasure Hill, the legend says, uncovered a rich deposit.

“Immediately a mine was opened, Indian slaves cleared the jungle, a village was built under the shadow of the hill, and a few hundred yards away, upon the banks of the river, a *rastra* was erected for the grinding of the ore.

“The mine at Treasure Hill once opened and in active operation, the same band of adventurers pushed inland toward the Cordilleras, and again met with success in what they called the Laborosa, a mountain fastness twenty-five miles from Treasure Hill, and

within the present boundaries of the Hacienda San Nicolás. This new mine proved to be rich beyond the 'wildest dreams of avarice,' as they say. The trails leading up from Treasure Hill to the Laborosa were exceedingly rough, and the mine almost inaccessible for heavily laden mule trains. The transportation of supplies by any other method was impossible, and it was found necessary to build a road, to connect the two mines. Slaves were put at work, and in a little while gulches were bridged by massive stone arches, the sides of canyons were cut away, and what was really a marvellous feat of engineering was accomplished.

"Long trains of supplies began to move inland to the mine, and for two hundred years the Laborosa poured yellow metal to Treasure Hill, whence it was forwarded to the fortified vaults at San Blas, to be despatched at leisure to Spain. It was a mine of marvellous riches.

"Finally the revolution came, and brought disaster to the Spaniards, and they were forced to flee the country. A large amount of gold, run into ingots, was at the Laborosa and Treasure Hill mines when the order came to retreat. San Blas was evacuated, and it was no longer safe to attempt to move the metal across the mountains; but with sanguine expectations of finally conquering the revolutionary army, and re-occupying the country, the ingots from the Laborosa were rushed down to Treasure Hill, all the metal of both mines, to the value of many millions of pesos, it is said, was hidden in the Treasure Hill mine, the entrance of the mine closed and concealed, the buildings destroyed, and every Indian slave who had been

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employed in the work, or who would be likely to know of the concealed gold, was killed.

"The army of the revolution conquered and the Spaniards never returned. Neighboring Indians who had watched the final work of the Spaniards, conceived a superstitious dread of the abandoned mines and avoided the locality. Three or four short years sufficed the jungle to effectually cover all traces of the village at Treasure Hill and the road to the Laborosa, and only a legend of their existence remained. From that day Treasure Mountain has been called by the natives '*El Cerro del Tesoro*' — The Lock of the Treasure — and the story has been handed down from father to son.

"Five years ago, two Americans appeared at the Hacienda San Nicolás with charts of Treasure Hill and the hidden mine. These charts they said they had obtained from an old Spanish priest in California, who told them they had been given him by another Spanish priest, who was one of the last to leave the mine. The two men searched the hill for days, but finding no trace of the mine or buildings decided it was all a hoax, and returned home.

"The next act in the drama was the arrival of Gates as manager of the hacienda after our company purchased it. The story was told to Gates and his curiosity was aroused. An aged Indian declared to him that one day, many, many years ago, he was working near Treasure Hill and cut himself badly with his machete. He plunged down through the jungle, in haste to reach his cabin, to have his wound dressed, and in his flight unexpectedly came upon the closed entrance of the mine. He was in too great pain to

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stop to examine it then, and too agitated to mark accurately its location. Later he returned and searched for it, but never could find it.

"Gates put a gang of mozos to work clearing the jungle about the hill. It was tedious work, for the growth was heavy, and just as he had decided the whole thing a legend without basis, and not worth further effort, the stone foundations of several buildings were uncovered. The search was continued, but with no further results at that time.

"Thomas Farmen, an old prospector from Colorado, now appeared. He heard the story, and at once bent his attention to the location of the Laborosa mine. After weeks of hard work in the overrun jungle, he found a trace of the old road. This he followed for several miles, discovering ruined bridges of massive stone-work, and cuts along the walls of almost impassable canyons. But Tommy's grubstake failed him, and he had to abandon his efforts temporarily.

"A little later one more discovery was made. Three or four months ago Gates had some men at work near the river bank, in a direct line from the foundations discovered at Treasure Hill, and lo! they excavated the old *rastra* where the ore was milled and washed."

This was Emerson's interesting and romantic story. It so excited my curiosity, that later I visited the ruins of the old *rastra*, and saw them myself.

Tommy Farmen rode in one day while I was at the hacienda, and spent the night with us. He told me of his search for the Laborosa mine, and described to me vividly the road he had found, with its ruined bridges and cuts.

"Them bridges and that road were built for some-

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thin' rich," he declared. "Th' stories o' that old mine 's all true, an' when I gets a grubstake agin' I'm goin' t' find th' damn mine or bust."

I hope it will not be "bust," but the mine for Tommy, and that it will be everything the legends say it is. Tommy has spent his life hunting for gold, and several times has "struck it rich," but always he was too free-handed and too trustful of others, and his wealth slipped from him.

There are some valuable mines in active operation in Tepic Territory, but mining has not received the attention here that it has had elsewhere in Mexico, or that it deserves. Prospectors, however, are beginning to turn their attention to it. There is no doubt that the mountains are highly mineralized, but silver is the metal most likely to be found, though all the legends of old Spanish or Indian mines tell of gold. There are many of these tales to be heard in the territory, some of them doubtless with foundation of truth, though all of them greatly exaggerated.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INDIAN AND THE LAND

ONE morning soon after our arrival at the Hacienda San Nicolás we rode out to see the laborers at work in the bottom-land fields, and to witness the mediaeval farming methods still in vogue. Here the Indian plants and harvests his crops just as his ancestors did for generations upon generations before him, and the time and labor saving machinery invented within the past hundred years, which has so completely revolutionized farming in civilized lands, has never supplanted the archaic implements of the early Spanish days, or hand work of the primitive Indian.

We took the trail early, that the intense heat of the tropical midday might be avoided. It was a glorious morning. The air was soft and balmy, and fragrant with new-day sweetness, the foliage dripped with moisture, the cloudless sky was a delicate opalescent blue, and as the sun flared up over the crests of sapphire and emerald hills to flood the world with its dazzling light, the dew-drops on the bushes sparkled and shimmered like a mass of exquisite pearls.

In the thick growth of the river valley through which our trail led, the shrubs and even the higher trees were matted and festooned with a profusion of wild honeysuckle and morning-glories, now in full bloom, and displaying a hundred shades of color.

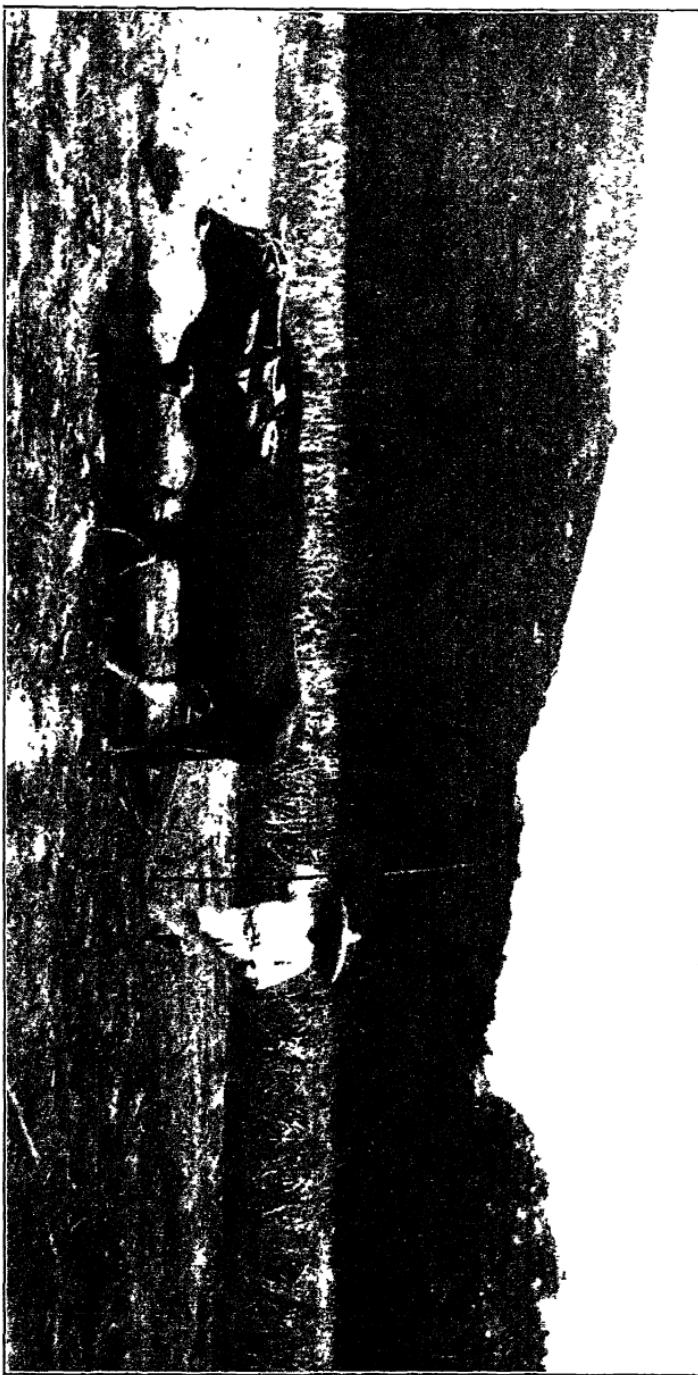
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These morning-glories are a remarkable production of nature. They are nearly twice as large as our garden varieties, and are rich and velvety. One sees them here in various shades of red, blue, pink, and yellow, from the lightest gold to the deepest orange, and some in variegated tints. Matted among them were garlands of the honeysuckle, and brilliant reds of other flowering vines. This gorgeous mass of flowers and foliage banked our trail on either side and stood a full half hundred feet above our heads.

The atmosphere was charged with the perfume of sweet-smelling blossoms, the forest resounded with the marvellous songs of the mocking-bird, and a hundred unseen warblers vied with one another to fill the world with melody. It was a wilderness of color, of music, and sweet scents beyond anything I had ever pictured or imagined. Even our horses seemed to feel the inspiration of it, and our two dogs, Capitan and Quien Sabe, barked joyously as they dashed ahead.

These dogs were two big native animals kept at the hacienda as watch-dogs, and were trained to hunt the jaguar, which occasionally prowls about in search of calves. Capitan had been purchased from an Indian a few months before, and previous to the day he was brought to the ranch house had never met a white man. He showed at once a fine discrimination of human qualities. He went immediately to Gates and Kaiser and fawned over them as though they were his real masters, showed his teeth to his old Indian owner, and thenceforth declined friendly relations with all natives. He is now the stanch friend of the white man, but the implacable enemy of every Mexican, and many of the latter bear his teeth marks.

The ploughman





José, our waiter — an Indian youth of twenty

He chewed a mozo's leg pretty badly the day before our arrival, just because the mozo was appropriating something that did not belong to him.

The Hacienda San Nicolás is a rather small ranch. It contains only about forty-five thousand acres, or approximately seventy-five square miles, and until recently was a part of the large landed estate of a Mexican hidalgo. Its lower end is five miles below, or to the westward of the ranch house, and it runs eastward twenty-five miles into the rugged mountains of the Laborosa.

Our trail carried us over a small eminence and down on the farther side to a creek. As our horses splashed into the water a huge alligator dashed from a sunny place on the bank, where it had been warming itself, and as it swam away the waves and ripples, created by the movement of its great tail, marked the direction it took. The dogs hesitated a long time before venturing into the stream, for they instinctively knew that the alligators were looking for just such dainty morsels as they; but when we ceased calling and coaxing them and rode away on the opposite side, they took a desperate chance and followed us.

Just beyond the creek was a clearing, where a mozo with an ox team was ploughing for the November corn planting, and I swung about my horse and snapped my camera upon them before the ploughman was aware of what I was doing. Nearly all my pictures were taken from horseback or mule back, for the natives were so timid at the appearance of a camera it would often have been impossible to photograph them in any other way. At first on several occasions I dismounted and attempted to photograph Indians

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from the ground, but so frequently it happened that the object of my interest ran away before I could get my camera trained upon him, I adopted the more stealthy method of half concealing the instrument and taking chances from the saddle.

The plough was the typical Mexican plough and was constructed of two pieces of wood, the one a long pole, an end lashed to a cross piece, which was in turn lashed to the horns of the oxen, the other end mortised into another stick at right angles. The lower end of the latter stick, fashioned into a curved point, served as a ploughshare for stirring the earth, the upper end as a handle. Not a bit of iron, not even a bolt or nail, was used in its making. It was the ancient plough of Egypt, and I can safely say is neither patented nor controlled by the farm implement trust. The ploughman carried a long, sharp-pointed pole as a goad to urge the oxen into activity, though no particular activity, either on the part of ploughman or oxen, was noticeable.

"Everything and everybody," said Emerson, as we passed it, "gets like that ploughman and ox team after they are here a little while. The climate seems to sap your energy away and you don't know when it goes nor how it happens. Americans come down to Mexico with a great bluster of impatience at the slow-moving people, but in a little while they find that it does not do to hurry too much, and they learn to take their midday rest, and gradually adopt the Mexican way."

"It is so with all animal life. Honey-bees, for instance, brought from the North, with Northern energy, will work as though their life depended upon it for a few months, and then they get on to their job.

They learn there 's no winter to provide for, and honey can be gathered at any time, and after that they just quit work and loaf. They do enough to feed themselves from day to day, and the rest of the time take it easy as the people do."

It was harvest time for corn, and in the fields we rode through, men were husking the ears from standing stalks — which they do not cut — and throwing them over their shoulders into baskets, suspended by shoulder straps in some instances, and by tump lines, with the forehead strap, in others. The tump line is used by a good many of them for carrying burdens, just as it is by the Indian *voyageurs* in the Canadian wilderness.

In the centre of the corn-fields natives were gathered around baskets shelling the grain by hand. Shelling machines have never been introduced into this part of Mexico, and it would be a hard task to induce the natives to use them. Gates brought down some hay forks from the States, but the natives would not adopt them, insisting upon using, instead, a crotched stick which they cut in the woods such as they had always been accustomed to. He had the same experience with ox yokes. They prefer to lash the plough beam or cart pole to the animal's horns, after the antiquated fashion which the Spaniards taught them, and nothing can induce them to adopt new methods. Gates also told me that when a nut jarred loose, or any little accident happened to a modern American plough he had brought to the hacienda, the natives had not sufficient ingenuity to adjust or repair it, or, having a preconceived dislike for innovations, would not try. They are a most conservative

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This is a summary of the crops raised on the Hacienda San Nicolás,—practically the same as on the Hacienda Navarrete, with the exception of tobacco,—and it is typical of the haciendas of a wide section of Western Mexico. Thousands and thousands of rich acres lie idle and overrun by the jungle.

Charles Bigelow, the member of Emerson's party whom I have mentioned as a scientific farmer, is to introduce on this ranch modern, up-to-date American methods. He is getting ready for the railroad which will cross the property, and in a little while a good part of the jungle will be put under cultivation by his efforts.

We crossed several good streams, and I was impressed with the naturally well watered condition of the fields, rendering artificial irrigation ditches, on the whole, unnecessary. In fact, there is not an irrigation ditch on the hacienda.

The larger part of Tepic Territory is well watered, and there is an immense amount of available power on the numerous streams, when need for its use arises. Some day it will doubtless be utilized to turn the wheels of cotton and other mills to work up the product of the soil.

Presently we began to climb the hills. At a lone cabin we halted and had a drink of water flavored with wild lime juice, and a native who lived there mounted an old mule and rode with us over the now rocky and steep trail to the hacienda lime kilns.

These kilns have been operated by the Indians for centuries to manufacture the lime used for tortillas. There has been no change in method in half a thousand years. The lime used for household and

building purposes at Santiago Ixcuintla, and in all the surrounding country, is produced in these primitive quarries and kilns. The stone is of good quality, and there is an unlimited quantity of it.

From the lime rock hill we looked down upon the fertile valley below, lovely and beautiful in its wild, uncultivated state — untamed, primitive, natural. I was almost sorry to think of the change that is certain to come upon it within the next decade, when the railroad is built and the farmer of the new era arrives to rob it of its rugged, primitive grandeur. It was now past midday. The natives had gone to their siesta an hour before, and an indolent, sleepy haze that told of intense tropical heat softened the rich green coloring of the valley below.

The Indian village of Acatan is on the hacienda, and three other groups of Indians, differing in language, dress, and customs, though living in close proximity to one another, occupy its farther confines beyond Acatan. There is also the small settlement at the western entrance on the Caimonaro River, which has been mentioned, at which point, I may say, the railroad is to cross; and the other settlement adjacent to the ranch house. The people of these settlements are the laborers and servants of the hacienda and are dependent upon it for their living. The majority of them are of pure Indian blood.

Attached to the ranch house is the hacienda store. This is open each evening, when the natives come to purchase their supplies for the following day. Coffee, sugar, lard and other necessaries are bought in small quantities of three or four centavos' worth. As each purchase is weighed out it is placed upon the ample

brim of the customer's sombrero, and when his trading is completed he walks away with the sombrero and groceries upon his head. Every hacienda has a store of this kind, where credit is extended to its people, who in turn pay their indebtedness in labor.

All of these natives live in the depths of poverty and ignorance. Their existence is from day to day. To this they are born into the world, and with them each day is sufficient unto itself. A barely covered nakedness, a bit of corn cake, beans and coffee, a bed on the bare earth, or, if fortune favors them, a canvas cot, is all they ever have or expect, and above and beyond these things their ambition never moves. Crushed by many generations of Spanish oppression, they have forgotten that the sky is blue and that the sun shines for them as it does for you and me. Little of the world's sunshine ever enters their poor hearts. They are, perhaps, as contented as any humans can be, but it is an unwholesome content. Ambition breeds a species of discontent that is wholesome — a kind of discontent that begets progress and elevated ideals. The peons of Mexico are not moved by any such feelings. It was hard for me to realize as I moved amongst them that they were the descendants of men who had fought and sacrificed to preserve their freedom, before the Spaniard finally reduced them to slavery.

The conditions here cited exemplify the conditions existing generally in the sections of Western Mexico that I visited. It is within the power of the Government to raise the peon population out of this deplorable state. The key to it is the unsettled public land. If Mexico, instead of granting large tracts to

single individuals or corporations, who let it lie un-tilled, would but offer it in quarter-section farms, after the manner of the United States, and permit her poor people to pay for homesteads at some designated future time, after they had been given an opportunity to glean from the soil its purchase price, there would be a decided change for the better. Ambition and industry would be engendered, and it would bring to Mexico a vastly increased wealth and power. Perhaps this is to be the policy of the Government when the population is lifted in some degree out of its dense ignorance. In towns of importance public schools have been established and the number of them is constantly being increased. During the administration of President Diaz, Mexico has made wonderful advancement. But he is an old man, and it is a question whether or not his successors, trained to continue his policies, will be strong enough to keep in subjection unprincipled political aspirants who stand ready always to foment revolution. The recent raids in the north were undoubtedly the work of impatient politicians feeling the pulse of the people.

As we returned I stopped by the way to fill my saddle bags with wild limes, which were very plentiful; and I tried my teeth in a rather good looking wild orange, but found it bitter in flavor and unpalatable. The limes, however, were as fine flavored as any cultivated fruit.

When we reached the house, drenched in perspiration, but ready for dinner, we found Kaiser entertaining an old Indian, Señor Hijar by name, evidently a man of some distinction amongst his people. His two sons, both men over thirty years of age, were with

him, and we were given a most ceremonious introduction to the visitors. The sons had found some clay idols, stone battle axes, arrow heads, and other really valuable relics of ancient origin, when working in a near-by field some time before, and as Kaiser was collecting these things, had presented them to him. He was good enough to share them with me, and to give me a bow and bunch of arrows, such as the Acatan Indians use in hunting the white-tailed deer and smaller game.

Here a curious bit of Mexican-Indian etiquette was brought to our notice. Cigars were passed, and though all three visitors accepted them, only the father lighted his. We offered the sons matches, but they politely declined. Then we learned that it was not good form for sons to smoke in their father's presence, no matter how old the sons might be, nor how much they smoked at other times. The old Don was requested to relinquish the rule of etiquette upon this occasion, for the sake of good fellowship, but he steadfastly, though politely, refused.

When the party were leaving us the old gentleman gave each of us the Mexican embrace — fell upon our necks, put his arms around us, and patted us on the back at the same time with his right hand. Then we all said "*adios*," and they mounted and rode away. The embrace is quite the usual thing at meeting and parting of friends, amongst men. Women embrace and kiss one another upon the cheeks. It is entirely possible for the women to do this, for they wear no hats — only a *mantilla*, *tapalo*, or *rebozo*, according to their walk in life.

Our day's ride brought to our notice some disagree-

able parasites — *garapotas* (wood ticks) and *guines*, the latter a microscopical insect of the bush, that burrows under the skin and is exceedingly annoying. I picked a dozen *garapotas* out of my skin. They all had their heads buried, and it is necessary to pull them loose with great care, for if a head is broken off under the skin an irritating lump forms that will give trouble afterward. It is impossible to ride through thick brush anywhere without getting them upon you. They are also very annoying to the horses. I used to pick them off my horse by the dozen, some of them swelled almost to the size of a large bean.

In spite of the burning heat of day, the evenings were delightfully cool. After dinner we gathered upon the patio veranda to lounge in easy chairs and smoke while we enjoyed the perfect quiet and peace that hovered over our secluded corner of the world.

CHAPTER IX

ON THE OLD STAGE ROAD

WE were in the saddle at daybreak and on the Tepic trail — Emerson, Randall, Bigelow, Gates, and myself, with Miguel as mozo, and one pack mule to carry our necessary baggage, which included a good supply of insect powder, for we would be compelled to spend a night at the famous — or perhaps I may truthfully say infamous — Navarrete hotel *en route*. We followed our old trail out to Santiago Ixcuintla, and here halted long enough to quench our thirst in lemonade. We expected also, in our innocence, to purchase a fresh supply of cut plug smoking tobacco, for our stock of pipe tobacco was at ebb.

The lemonade, really made with wild limes, was excellent, but to our chagrin we were unable to unearth a single package or plug of smoking tobacco in the place. We raided the town. At first we confidently demanded a certain brand, then we were willing to take any kind or variety; but there was not one ounce of the weed to be had in any shape, except in cigars and cigarettes. We purchased a stock of both, as a last resort. These poor benighted people have not yet learned to smoke a pipe. Ah, well, that will come to them, like other good things, with the railroad. They smoke a few cigars in Mexico, but even cigars are pretty heavy for most of them. The cigarette is the

universal favorite. Every one, men and women alike, smoke cigarettes, and it is etiquette to offer ladies cigarettes, when smoking in their company. You are free to smoke at any time, and any place, in Mexico, with but two exceptions—in church and in the Pullman cars. Though every one smokes, no one, however, smokes to excess. I was impressed at the moderation with which tobacco is used in Mexico.

The best of the cigars made in Western Mexico are only passably good. The lack of quality is due largely, or perhaps wholly, to the method of curing the tobacco, which is very carelessly and crudely done. When even moderate care is used in curing the results are fair, for the soil and climate are capable of producing an excellent quality of tobacco. In Eastern Mexico, particularly the Vera Cruz district, planters and manufacturers have learned the art, and the result is as fine cigars as the best Havana product. A twelve-cent Vera Cruz is equal to any twenty-five cent Havana.

Whatever may be said of the cigars, Mexican cigarettes are the best in the world, and some of those made in Western Mexico are especially good. Only pure tobacco is used in their manufacture and they are wrapped in paper that has not been bleached with arsenic. They have not the vile odor, and almost as vile flavor, of the drug-doped American, English, or Egyptian brands, and are not a hundredth part so harmful. I smoked a few of them, but usually extracted the tobacco and used it in my pipe.

In this connection I am reminded to say a word about the matches, for one cannot smoke without matches. They are the very worst in the world. They are wax taper matches, with heads on both ends;

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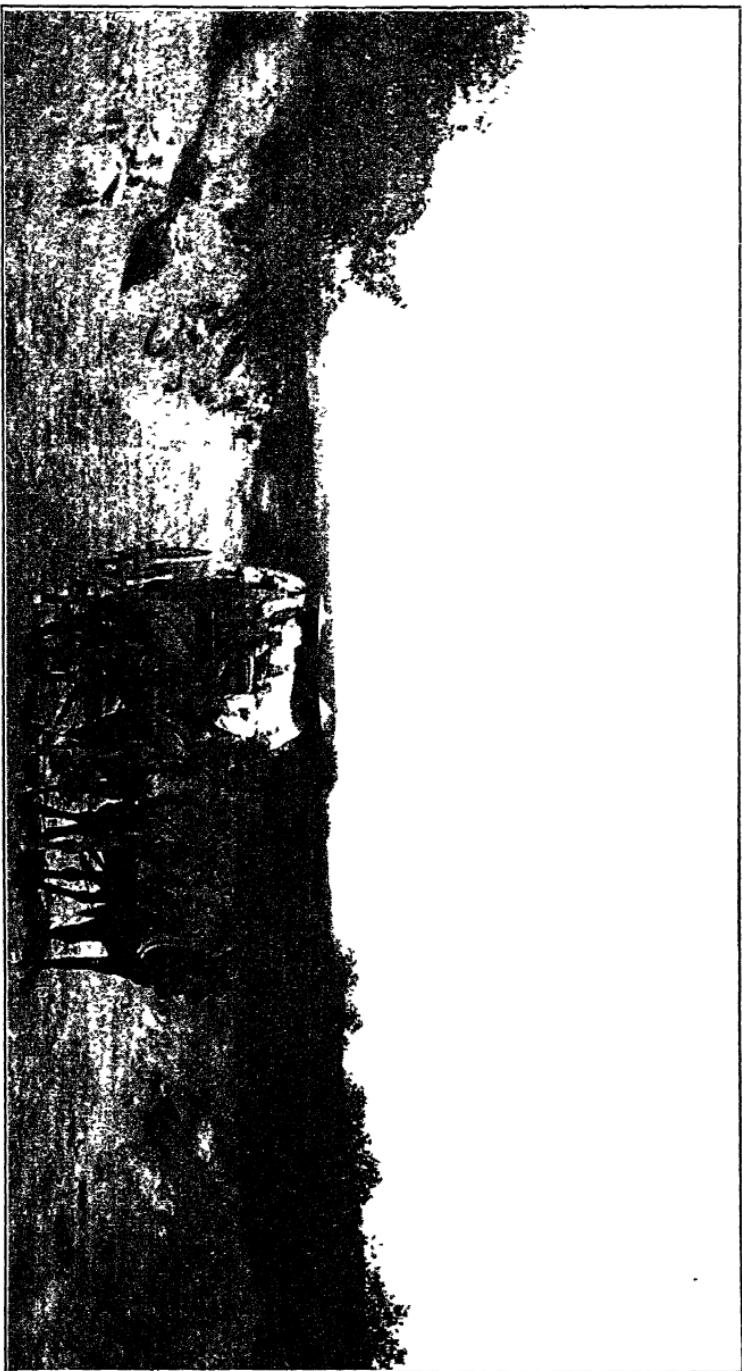
and the wax taper is usually so hard that it is difficult to make it ignite. Some of them are very minute in size, and in no way do they compare with our ordinary wooden parlor matches.

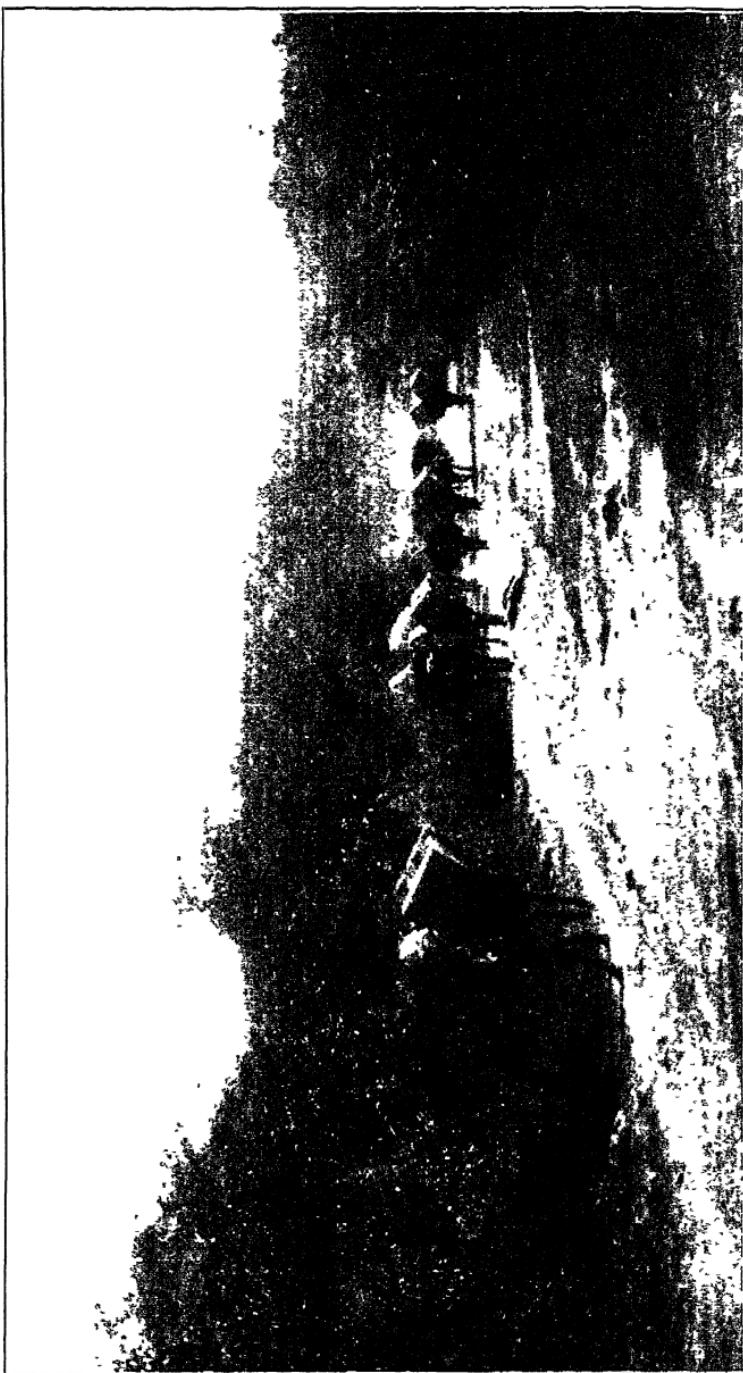
We reached Navarrete late in the afternoon and halted for the night. Thence to Tepic we were to follow the old San Blas military road, and the following morning found us on our way bright and early. This road is a part of the longest stage line in the world, running in relays from San Marcos, the nearest railroad point, to Guadalajara, Tepic, Santiago Ixcuintla, Culiacan, and thence on to Guaymas. During the rainy season the stages discontinue their run over long sections of it, for there are many rivers and streams to be forded, which at the time of the year when they are swollen to their banks are quite impassable. During the very hot period the stages only run at night, but through the more moderate season, night and day relays push on regularly from point to point.

The stage between Santiago Ixcuintla and Tepic City had just resumed its runs, and we were fortunate enough to meet it. It is a crude old affair drawn by six mules, four abreast in the lead, and two on the wheel. The theory is that any road wide enough to permit the four leading mules to squeeze through will be wide enough for the stage, and usually this is true, though not always. A driver and an armed guard sit upon the box, mail bags and baggage fill the centre of the archaic vehicle, and passengers, as many as can crowd in, stow themselves away as best they may.

They should paint a sign over the door: "He who enters here takes his life in his hands." It is a place of real, refined, diabolical torture. The driver has

The Tepic stage on the longest stage line in the world





A pack train

but one object in life — to go fast down-hill, and over rough places at the highest attainable speed. He primes himself with mescal, and away he goes, dashing at a gallop down rocky hills, swinging around curves, or skirting precipices where the wheels scarce have earth to turn upon, until you and your fellow passengers, helpless prisoners within, have the breath jarred out of you, and are in constant panic, in expectation of being turned over and hurled into some mountain gorge, or dashed to pieces upon the rocks. They do turn over sometimes, but it only now and then happens that any one is killed, or even seriously injured. To say the least, though, it annoys one dreadfully to have a leg or arm broken, and I never knew a passenger with a broken nose to look pleasant. Mere scratches and bruises do not count.

I met an American mining engineer who told me he once attempted the journey from San Marcos to Tepic in the stage. He was uninitiated and unsophisticated then, and did not know any better. "I thought I would be real comfortable," said he, "so I bought two sittings. We left San Marcos at night, and when I crowded inside of the stage I found it apparently full of mail bags and passengers. I protested that I owned two sittings, and wanted to know where they were, but the driver only informed me there was plenty of room, and I'd have to do the best I could. So I accepted the situation, thinking it would be good fun anyway, and a new experience, and crowded into half a sitting between two very dirty Mexicans, with the mail bags piled against our knees between the seats. When we started I thought every joint in my body would be jolted out of its socket.

But there was no help for it; I was in for what was due me.

"That was the most horrible night I ever lived through. The stage turned over three times, and we all had to help right it. When we stopped at a little village toward morning, to change mules, I gave up. I had had enough of it for ever and ever. I resigned my two sittings. I told the driver I would present them to the company — that I had had my money's worth. One eye was swelled shut from a whack I'd had, the skin was half scraped off one cheek, I had a sprained wrist, and was so lame from the jolting I could hardly walk. I finished my trip on mule back. No more stages for me! The remembrance of that night is like a nightmare."

The road from Navarrete to Tepic was excellent for horseback riding, but it was hard to see how a stage could pass over some sections of it. The stage company, I was informed, receives an amount of money from the Government, each year, sufficient to keep this road in passable condition, but very little work is ever done upon it, and that little only when absolutely necessary.

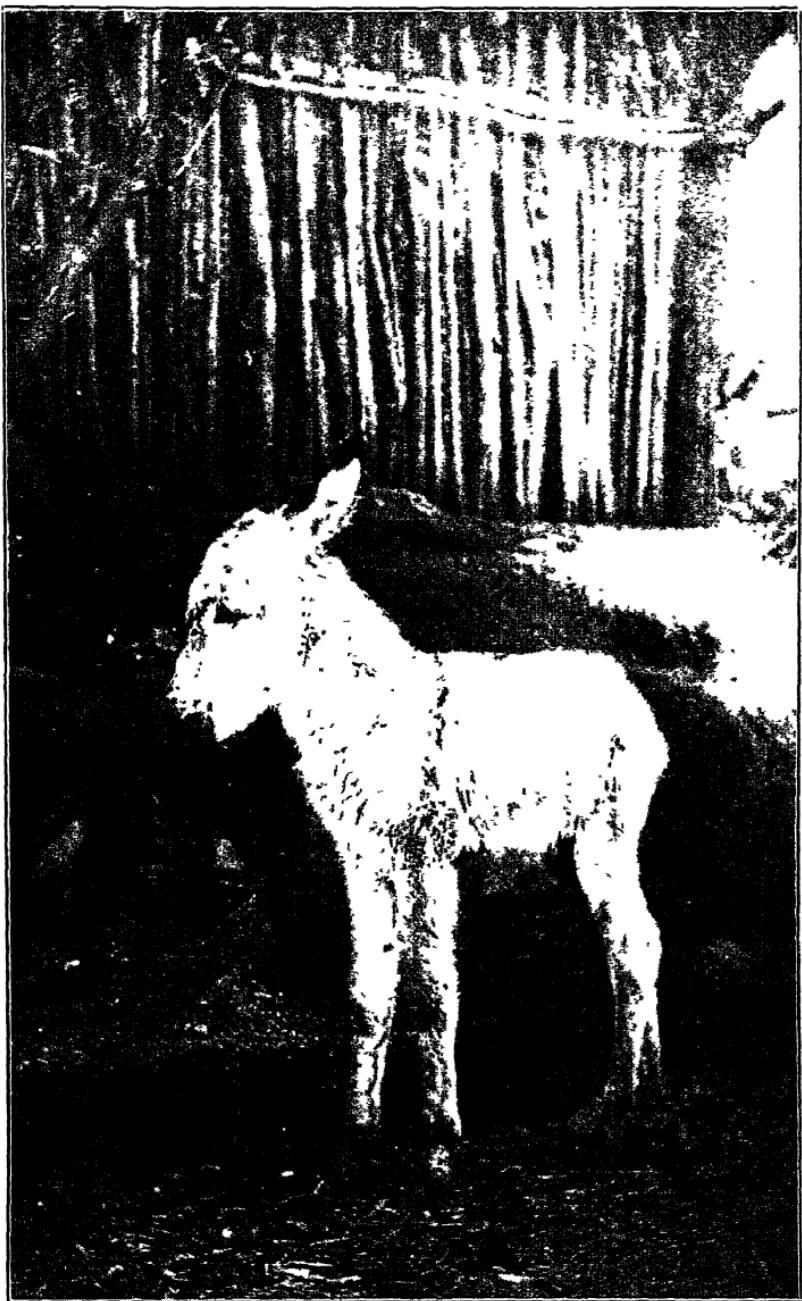
Tepic City is three thousand feet above the sea, and Navarrete less than a thousand, so our day's ride was pretty constantly up-hill. Pack train after pack train was passed, some of them with fifty or sixty animals, mostly mules, but some burros, and an occasional horse, loaded down with all kinds of merchandise — boxes, barrels, packages, and machinery. The larger trains had a mare, with a cow-bell attached to its neck, in the lead. This is known as the bell mare, and it carries no load. The mules are supposed to keep

within earshot of the bell, and follow it meekly. Several muleteers, some on horseback, but generally afoot, were in attendance, spread down along the line of animals, to urge them on; and when a mule fell or lay down under an excessive burden, the muleteer's duty was to prod it up again. Very often, when an animal got down, it could not rise until the load was removed. The men carried leather blinds to put over the mule's eyes while they replaced the load, for some mules are sportive with their heels and teeth, if they can see how to use them.

Nearly every mule had great galled places on the back, where the pack saddle rested. Some of them showed raw flesh the full size of the saddle, or wherever a strap touched them. The average Mexican muleteer has no sympathy for brute or man. He generally takes delight in witnessing agony, or is at least indifferent to the torments of the sufferer. An American miner told me that he was riding out of the mountains one day with some associates, when they came upon a party of muleteers, halted by the trail to eat. A little distance from the muleteers a pack mule lay, with a broken leg. The Mexicans had removed the pack, but had not killed the mule, as civilized men would have done, out of mercy. Vultures were already attacking it, and pecking the eyes out of the helpless, living animal, while the Mexicans derived much evident enjoyment from the horrid spectacle. One of the Americans rode forward, drew his Colt, and ended the sufferings of the mule. The chief amongst the Mexicans protested, said the mule was *his* property, and that he could do with it as he chose, that the American had no right to shoot it, and that he would have revenge.

The American told the Mexican, in good strong Spanish, with all the embellishment at his command, what he thought of such cruelty and inhumanity, and the miners rode on. A short time afterwards the American was summoned to court, and was forced to pay for that mule the current value of a first-class animal, with damages! Upon what basis the damages were assessed is hard to imagine, but perhaps the magistrate had a personal interest in them.

Some writers on Mexico tell us that every peon has an insatiate love for flowers, and no matter how poor and insignificant his hut, it will be surrounded by a beautiful garden. So far as my observations go, and I had a pretty good opportunity to observe, this statement has no foundation in fact, but is a bit of maudlin sentiment. Prescott tells us that this was the case amongst the Aztecs, and I suppose that those who repeat it now have read Prescott, and feel bound to substantiate the statement as a present-day condition. It was one of the things that Randall and I were particularly interested in, and we looked in vain for a single effort at ornamentation amongst the peon settlements. It is strange that they do not have gardens where flowers grow so luxuriantly and freely, and without cultivation. Almost invariably, however, the ground around the huts is not only without flowers and ornamentation, but is bare of any vegetation. Pigs rooting around the huts do not permit even grass to grow, and at every hut along our route pigs of all shapes, sizes, and complexions, belonging to the razor-backed varieties, were in evidence, some running free, some tied by a string around the neck to the door-post.



The baby mule



A type suggestive of the Semitic

Half-starved dogs were numerous, and burros and mules, old and young, wandered at their own sweet will in or out of the open doors. One particularly sad-looking, forlorn baby mule attracted my horse's attention. We were sauntering slowly up a hill when the pony descried the beast, pricked up his ears, and looked at it intently. I gave him his rein, and he stopped to smell the little mule over, which, with disdainful indifference, ignored us. When the pony had finished his inspection, and had classified the thing, he moved on, apparently satisfied as to its identity.

We were getting well up into the hills, and at one point a magnificent view was afforded us. The brick-red earth where we were, lost itself in an expanse of green, which was gradually modified by a transparent haze rising from the lower valleys into soft blue in the far distance to the northward. Here at our feet lay valleys, gentle rolling hills, rivers like silver threads winding their way to the sea, as far as our vision could range — a rich, virgin land — larger and richer in natural resources than many a kingdom of old Europe. To the westward lay the Pacific, wrapped in an opalescent haze, and to the eastward the bold peaks of the mighty Sierra Madres stood out against the turquoise sky, magnificent and grand.

At this elevation there were more rocks than in the lower altitudes and the soil was not so arable. The jungle had given way to a more scattered growth, and here we saw no timber of commercial value. The country was not so well watered, though we crossed several small streams, and on one hacienda saw an ancient irrigation ditch, sections of it still in use, though other parts were fallen into decay.

90 BEYOND THE MEXICAN SIERRAS

The people gazed at us in wonder as we rode by, and we were evidently much more interesting to them than they were to us, for already we were becoming accustomed to the picturesque sombreros, gay-colored zerapes, white cotton clothing, and sandalled feet, though still we were attracted by the types that suggested the Semitic, Malay, or Mongolian, and now and again one whom we could easily fancy a Bedouin of the plains.

I wonder where these people had their origin. In this section I suppose they are chiefly a mixture of the Aztecan and Otomian stocks. Here and there a light-haired child suggests the Teutonic — a parental influence, I suppose, left by some bird of passage. But Mexico is old, very old. There is reason to believe that people lived there at the remotest period. There are ruins in Mexico of cities that were old when the Egyptian pyramids were young, whose origin was probably forgotten when Solomon's Temple was dedicated, and were ancient ruins before Nebuchadnezzar ascended the Babylonian throne. What Marathons and Thermopylæs, unsung and unrecorded, may have been fought in this old-new land, and what arts and sciences discovered, to pass into the realm of the Forgotten, in the long-ago misty ages! However, we are not interested in the Past, but in the Present, and we shall let the gray old centuries take care of themselves.

We were approaching Tepic City, and were recalled from our reverie by the first and only good cow that we saw in the whole of Western Mexico. She appeared from somewhere in the roadside bushes and trotted along ahead of us for a considerable distance, wishing doubtless to display her good qualities. She was of

undoubted Dutch extraction. It was an indication that somebody in this neighborhood was not satisfied with the general condition of things, for the animal had been imported, probably by some American or German resident.

Our attention was drawn from the cow to a Don, dressed in velvet and gold lace, after the most approved Mexican fashion, and full of conceit and *tequila*. He was mounted upon a magnificent horse, caparisoned with silver-mounted saddle and bridle, and was too drunk to see or care for mere externals like ourselves.

We entered the city at two o'clock in the afternoon, rode slowly through the quaint outskirts and the Calle de Mexico, the chief street, to the plaza, and into the patio of the Hotel del Bolo de Oro, which was to be our domicile while we looked over our first real Mexican city.

CHAPTER X

THE HOTEL AND THE BARBER

THE Hotel del Bolo de Oro is on a corner, and on one side faces the beautiful plaza of Tepic. The building is of massive masonry, two stories high, and in the centre is a patio, one hundred feet square, in which palms and flowers luxuriantly grow to lure one to its cool, delightful retreat. Completely surrounding the patio is a wide balcony, upon which all the rooms of the upper story open. The two rooms assigned to our party were on this floor, on the street side; and with windows extending from ceiling to floor, the balmy, delicious air circulated through the apartment without obstruction. The floors were of well worn tile, uncarpeted; the furniture consisted of washstands and chairs, which were of the plainest, and conventional canvas cots, unprotected by the usual cheesecloth mosquito bars, for there were said to be no mosquitoes here. The hotel was electric-lighted throughout.

We found the dining-room on the opposite side of the patio from our rooms, and on the same floor, and here we proceeded at once to enjoy what proved a really excellent dinner, for a Mexican hotel. The menu included *sopa* (rice boiled rather dry, with tomatoes and chilli peppers); *caldo* (soup, hot with pepper); *carne* (meat—this was roasted, and flavored with peppers); *picadillo* (minced meat, with pepper);

chillaquile (tortillas, chopped and spiced); *mole* (turkey, in red, dark gravy, highly flavored with peppers and things); *blanquillas** *fritos* (fried eggs, a sauce of chilli peppers to pour over them); *frijoles*, of course; *dulce* (a sweet concoction of some sort); black coffee; and Mexican cheese. There was no butter, for you never get that in any but American hotels, and the bread was poor, but the *tortillas* very good.

This is the characteristic dinner served in truly Mexican hotels of the better class, and if one has a good stomach, and good digestive powers, one can stand it for quite a while, without being driven to the doctor. Everything tastes well enough — excellent, I may say — after your palate has become accustomed to the chilli peppers and high flavoring used; but human intestines were never intended for such abuse as a continuous diet of this sort subjects them to, and it will ruin one's digestion as sure as fate, if one gives it half a chance. I suppose the Mexicans have been hardened to it. But it is not so with the average American, and if you happen to be in a Mexican town where there is an American hotel, fly to it as a haven. The most ordinary, middle-class American hotel is better in nearly every respect than the best Mexican hostelry, for in the latter you will not always find clean table linen or well-kept rooms; and the Mexican is, as a rule, a poor cook, and cannot even boil eggs well. If you call for your eggs "medium," the chances are you will get them as hard as they can be cooked, and if you want them soft, they are brought to you raw. If you do go to a Mexican hotel, however, do

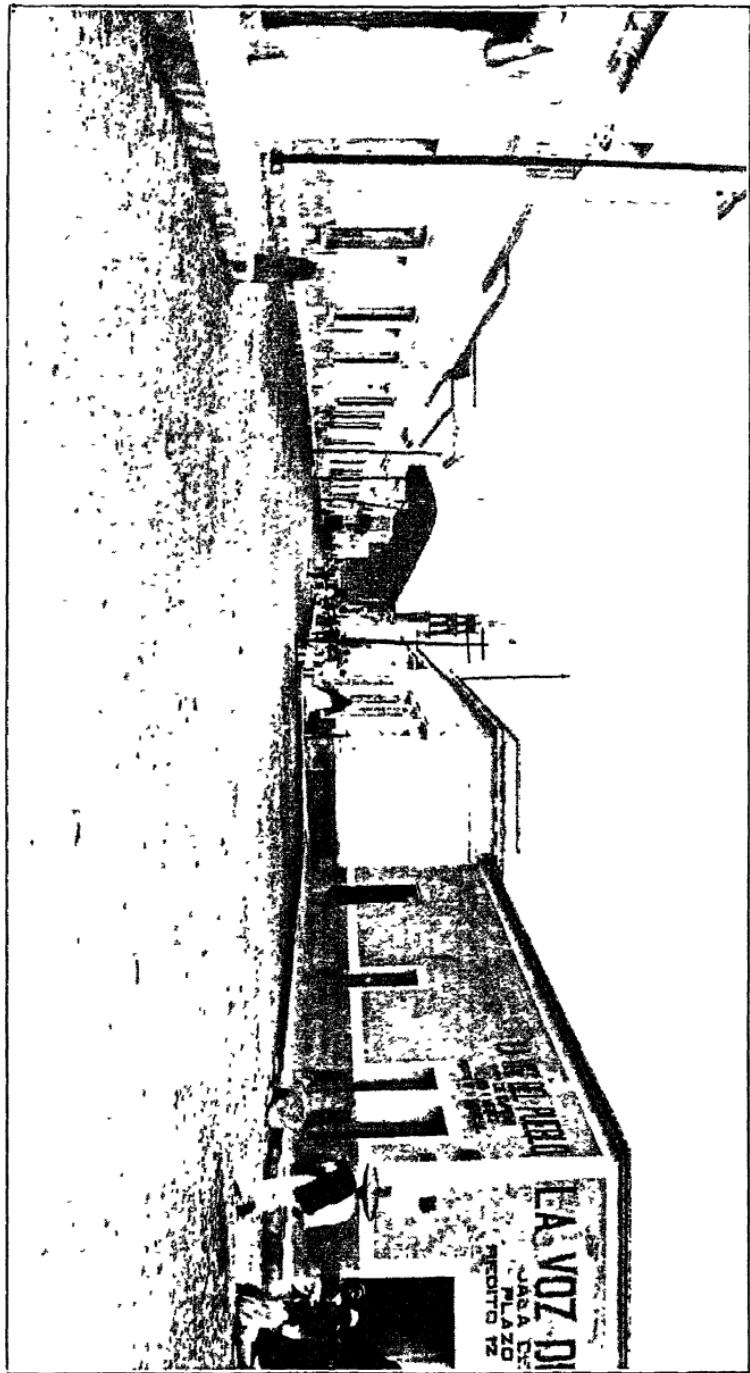
* In Western Mexico eggs are commonly called "*blanquillas*." It is an illustration of the Spanish used in this region.

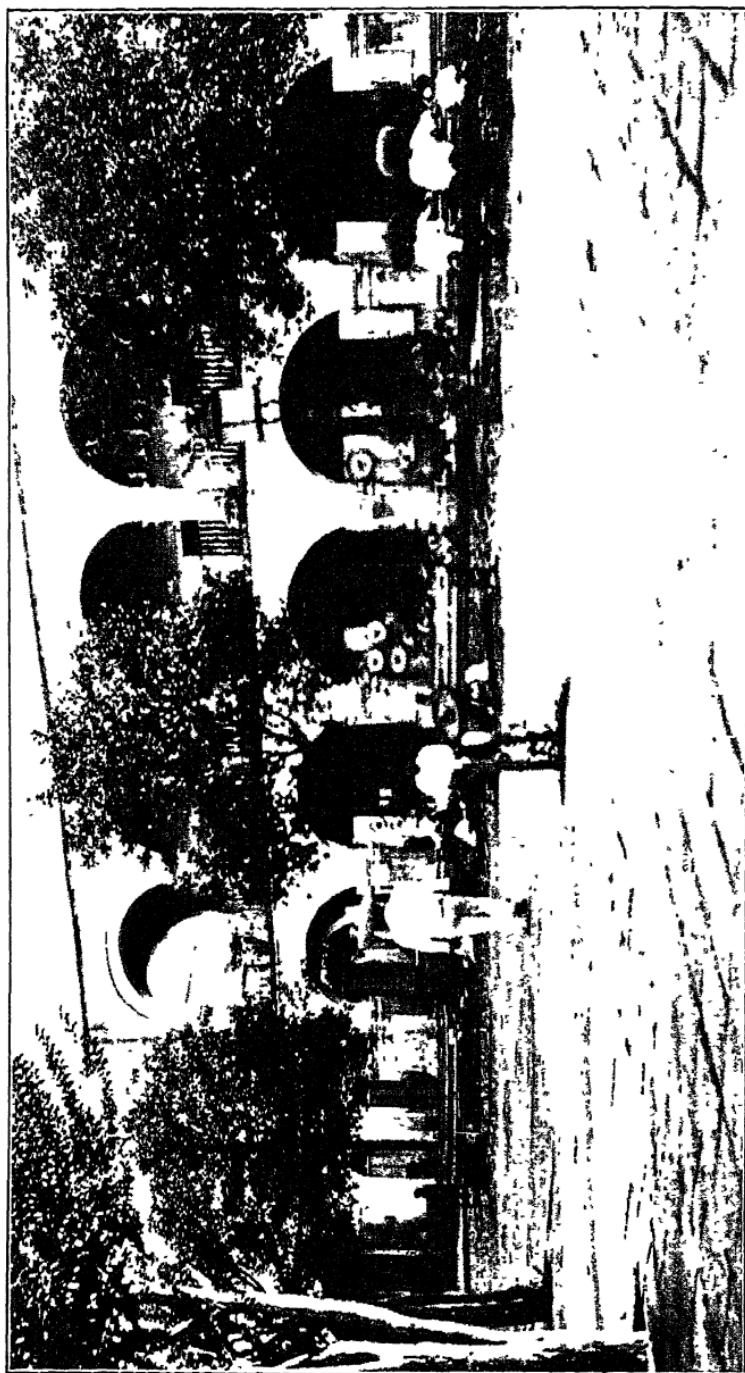
not find fault if things are not to your liking, but rest assured your host is doing for you the very best he can, according to his lights, and that you voluntarily submitted yourself to his care.

A writer on Mexico, to whom reference has been made in a previous chapter, says that "the restaurant advertised as English or American is to be avoided." In the sections of Western Mexico through which I travelled there are none but Mexican hotels. But later, when in Eastern Mexico, I boldly disregarded my friend's advice, and after that shed tears of compassion for those poor, unwary countrymen of mine who follow it and unnecessarily suffer from too much *chilli carne* and muddy coffee. But then, there are some travellers who like to gush over everything foreign, just because it is considered the thing to do, or to prove that they have a more highly sensitive and æsthetic temperament than we poor ordinary mortals, and these people find chilli peppers and muddy coffee so picturesquely Mexican that they partake of them with ecstatic joy.

The same author tells us that in Mexican hotels the hall boy "removes soiled linen articles, and *en mañana* has them back again, clean and snowy white, with no one on earth except himself knowing where in Mexico he takes them or whence he brings them." I permitted one hall boy to take my clothes, and he brought them back, not *mañana*, but in two days — what was left of them. The Chinaman has never half learned the art of destroying clothes; he should get some stones to pound them on, to be entirely successful. Whenever my things came back from a Mexican laundry, however, they were clean, according to Mexican standards.

Calle de Mexico, Tepic





Hotel del Bolo de Oro, Tepic City

Before leaving the subject of hotels, it may be interesting to mention that it is neither customary nor advisable to give tips anywhere west of the Sierra Madres. I did it on two occasions, and in both cases learned to my regret that the waiters became so familiar with the guests, and slack in their services, both to myself and others, that they were discharged from their employment by the Mexican proprietor, whose watchful eye discovered the lax attention pretty quickly, and without complaint from the visitors. I felt very uncomfortable about it, for my intended kindness was in both instances the root of the trouble.

After dinner we sallied forth in search of a barber and a bootblack, to freshen us up after our two days' unshaven, dusty ride. We found both in a shop almost directly across the street, where a burly brigand wielded the razor, and a small Indian boy the brush. We hesitated at the open door as we took in the greasy barber, the untidy room, and the archaic, dirt-begrimed chair in which innocent victims were consigned to torture.

"Don't look very good. Let's find another place," suggested Randall.

"It's all right," reassured Gates, who, through long residence in Mexico, had become hardened to the conditions. "It does n't *look* very good," he assented, stepping forward, "but this barber is an *artist*. Anyhow he has the best shop in town."

Then we timidly followed Gates. In spite of his unprepossessing appearance, the barber was a very polite rascal, as most Mexicans are, and he welcomed us with a bow and a "*Buenas tardes, señors*," and inquired how he could serve us. Gates told him we

wanted to be barbered and polished. The barber cleared for action, and, by mutual consent, Emerson was given the right of way, because he owned a full beard that he did not want tampered with, and desired only a hair-cut. I shall not describe the operation nor Emerson's appearance afterward, for only his aspect when he descended from the chair, and not the operation, was painful or interesting. We were all unusually magnanimous in insisting that the others should be shaved first. None of us was selfish about his turn, and each was quite satisfied to wait while the rest were beautified and made comfortable by the "artist." The argument was finally settled by giving age the preference, and this made Randall the first martyr. We watched expectantly when the lathering was done, and the razor was brought forth, for evidence of Randall's emotions, for he has a stiff, hard beard. As the instrument descended over one cheek, the victim clutched the chair, like one having a tooth extracted, his face became distorted with pain, and there came one long-drawn "H-e-ll!"—and we knew how Randall felt.

There are times when a man's courage fails him, and so it was with me then. I could not bring myself to face the ordeal of that barber's manipulations, and I fled. I called to the others to wait for me, that I would be back soon, and I escaped to the quiet retreat of the hotel across the way. In my travelling bag I had a shaving outfit. I found it, enjoyed a comfortable shave, and was back in the barber's shop in time to see the brigand put the finishing touches upon Bigelow's bleeding countenance, the last of the trio, and to be called names by the others for my cowardice,

which I indifferently atoned for by treating everybody to a shine.

Now that we were freshened and brushed, it was decided before acquiring any of the dust of the town to call upon a friend of Emerson, Dr. B. Wallace, a California dentist who has been extracting Mexican molars for ten years. We found Dr. Wallace in his beautiful home on the Calle de Mexico, and spent a delightful two hours with him and his charming wife. The former called me "*Tocayo*," which means "namesake," and both of them made us feel like old friends at once. Two months later, when in Culiacan, I was shocked by the news of Mrs. Wallace's death.

Outwardly the house was the characteristic, plain, barred-window, prison-like structure of Spanish architecture, but within it was an artistic and charming home, with wide, cool rooms, opening upon the bright flowers and palms of the patio, where birds filled the air with sweet music. Dusk came before we brought ourselves to leave our friends, and to return to the hotel for supper, before setting out to get a glimpse of the almost deserted plaza and streets.

It was delightfully cool here, in marked contrast to the hotter climate of the lower levels of Santiago Ixcu-intla and Navarrete, and the natives were muffled to their eyes in bright-colored zerapes — the few of them that remained out of doors; for there was no music on the plaza that night, and on those nights when the band does not play Mexican towns go to sleep at a very early hour.

CHAPTER XI

THE CAPITAL CITY OF TEPIC

A CLANG! clang! clang! like a trackman striking a steel rail with a heavy sledge, but much louder, followed by a burst of atrocious, discordant, clamoring sounds such as one hears in a boiler shop in full operation, awakened me at dawn, with a start, and brought me up sitting. The cathedral bells were calling devotees to early mass. They were not ringing, — it would be a slander upon real bells to say that, — but the tuneless, cracked things were filling the world with a horrid din of smashing and banging, which turned one's thoughts to infernal regions rather than those of ethereal glory, though I suppose they were intended to signify the latter.

There was a movement in the direction of Randall's cot, and I heard him swearing softly to himself, and impious ejaculations issued from the other room in a voice that reminded me of Gates. For five minutes the harsh, metallic hammering continued, and then suddenly ceased and I settled again for another nap. But I had scarcely begun to doze when clang! clang! came again to introduce a repetition of the diabolical noise, and then reluctantly, sadly, I gave up all hope of further sleep and arose. We had heard the racket, occurring at intervals, the previous afternoon and evening, but it had stopped before bedtime, and had

not annoyed us much. Now it was different, and with anything but good-humor I threw open the window blinds to let in the sprightly, refreshing morning air to cool my irritation.

On the street below women, with sombre-colored rebosos closely wound around their heads, were going to mass; big-hatted peons, wrapped to their eyes in bright-colored zerapes, to protect them from the cool morning atmosphere, followed in the train of heavily laden mules and burros, or leisurely took their way to daily occupations; and a man with a wooden tray of buns upon his head called out his wares, — “Fruit of the oven! Fruit of the oven!” A gayly dressed hidalgo trotted past upon a magnificent horse caparisoned as showily as his rider; mozos were sweeping the streets opposite their masters’ houses; and shop windows were being thrown open. Tepic was awake. Nobody could sleep after the boiler shop in the cathedral belfry began working, and Tepic, long-suffering Tepic, knew it.

There is an interesting story about these cathedral bells that is worth repeating. As the legend goes, the priests at Tepic announced one day that the spirits of the bells were going to Rome to be blessed by the Pope, and that the bells could not ring again until their spirits came back. It would take about seven days for them to make the trip, and it was necessary to raise a large amount of money to defray the expenses of the spirits while they were away. Therefore, the peons were called upon to contribute every centavo they could spare, for if the spirits of the bells did not have money enough to get blessed, and return home, all Tepic would be everlastinglly damned. Of

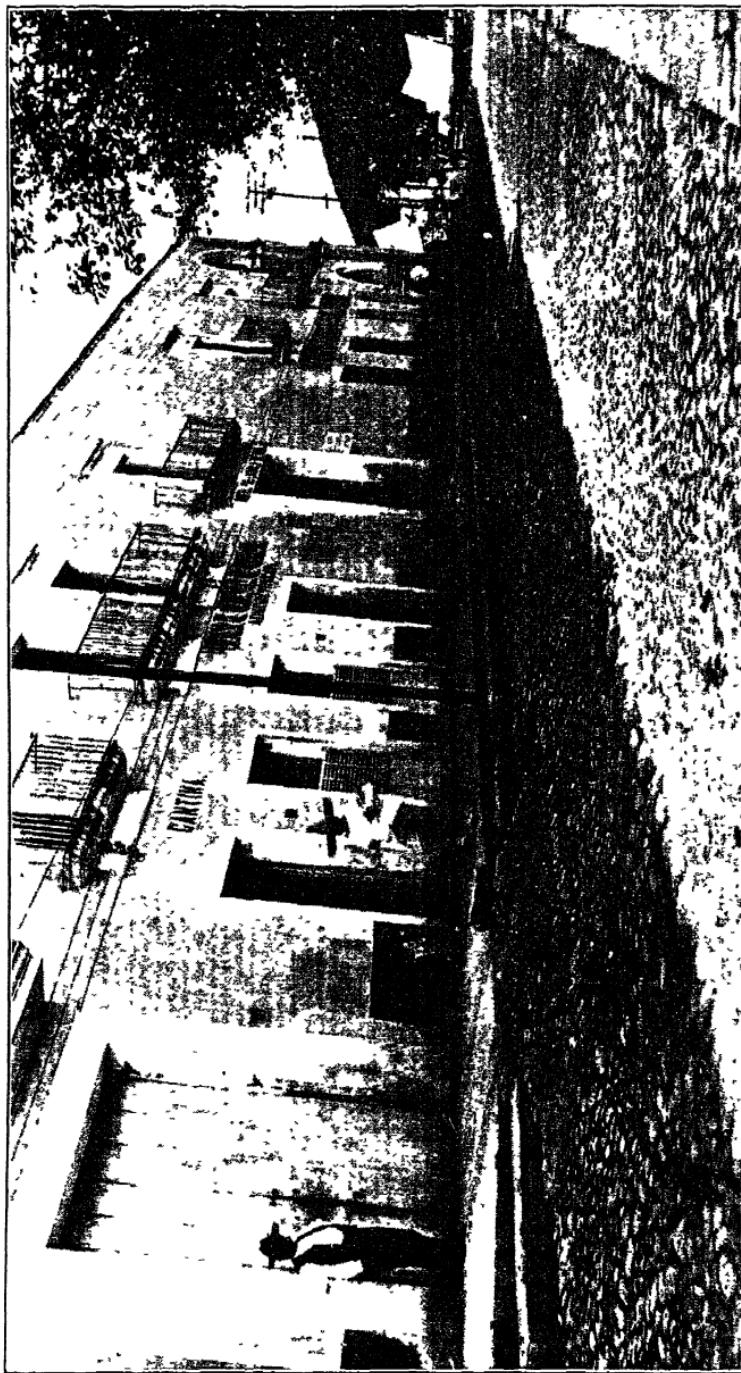
course, the bells ceased their racket for a week, during which period the peons were in feverish, anxious suspense, and spent their time saying prayers for the success and safe return of the bells' spirits. What would happen in case the spirits of the bells failed to return was awful to contemplate! Finally one morning the old racket in the cathedral belfry resumed, and the tension was broken. The spirits were back! Tepic was saved! The town had escaped perdition, and everybody was pleased. That happened several years ago, and the only complaint we had to make against the arrangement was that the spirits did not stay in Rome until after our visit.

We ate our breakfast leisurely and then strolled out to the plaza, the centre of attraction in every Mexican city. The beautiful cathedral, with its two graceful spires, occupies a portion of the southern side of the square, and our hotel, with pillared and balconied front, the western. The square was otherwise surrounded by booths, where hat makers, leather workers, fruit and vegetable venders, and dealers in every conceivable article necessary to the life or comfort of the people, plied their trades. Fringing the plaza walk were stretched canvas awnings, to shelter the men and women who sold their wares there, and who stood around chatting, or squatted upon the ground, surrounded by little piles of red chilli peppers, oranges, *cherimoyes* and other tropical fruits and vegetables. Here and there an old woman might be seen heating frijoles and tortillas over a charcoal fire for the solace of the hungry peon, who purchased the delicacies at one, two, or three centavos' worth, according to the state of his appetite or



The plaza, Tepic City

A street in Tepic



pocketbook. Moving hither and thither were red, blue, and yellow zерapes and picturesque sombreros, giving life and color to a scene that could not fail to fascinate and hold the observer.

In the centre of the plaza grew luxuriant palms, orange, lemon, and coffee trees, and a profusion of tropical flowers. The much vaunted "bubbling fountain" which travellers invariably describe as placed in the centre of every Mexican plaza, and which usually exists only in the writer's imagination, save in a few of the eastern cities, was not there, but the plaza was beautiful and artistic, nevertheless — an emerald set in a circle of color.

The day was magnificent, the pure mountain air, charged with the perfume of flowers, was both invigorating and inspiring. Tepic, at an elevation of three thousand feet, and sitting as it does in the hollow of the mountains, has an ideal climate the year through, and is free from the fevers so prevalent in the hotter sections of the lower altitudes along the seacoast, and here the sufferer from calentura finds a retreat where he can convalesce and rest.

We halted at the shops, and bought some odds and ends, always paying three times the established price for them, because we were Americans, and therefore, according to the logic of the people, bloated plutocrats, each owning two or three railroads or their equivalent. For even here, in Tepic, stories have come from the tourist cities of the east, of the extravagance of Americans; and the merchants have picked up some crumbs of largess from the miner and the engineer. But the prices asked were reasonable enough, after a little dickering had driven them down

a bit, and we did not care. We had already learned that the vender would be dissatisfied with himself if he were paid, without question, the first price asked, and that if a second member of our party returned to duplicate an article five minutes after one of us had made a purchase, and had been so foolish as not to dicker, and cut the vender down in his demands, the price of the article in that brief period would have doubled, at least. The unsophisticated, "gentle-eyed" Mexican would have been metaphorically kicking himself because he had not asked more, for he believes the limit is never reached until the customer objects.

Once I asked the price of an article.

"Fifteen pesos, señor," answered the vender.

I walked away and he followed.

"How much will the señor give?"

"One peso."

Many exclamations of horror, at the very idea of selling the article at such a ridiculously low price.

"Seven pesos, señor,—six pesos? Two pesos? One peso, señor! Here, señor, it is yours for one peso."

I might have had it at a still lower price, but this was my offer, and I took it. It was a relic that had probably cost the vender a few centavos.

At the leather booths they were making everything from sandals to cartridge belts and saddles, and if you did not see what you wanted they would make it for you *mañana*; and at the hat booths they would take your measure for a hat of any style or shape you desired. Some of the Panamas were of exquisite texture and excellent workmanship, and at prices ridiculously low, according to our standards.

Some beautifully wrought zerapes drew me into a shop, and one which strongly resembled Navajo blanket work took my fancy. "That," said the dealer, "was made by the Indians of the mountains. They spun the fabric, and colored it with dyes made by themselves from vegetables, and wove it on their hand looms. I have but two of that sort in my whole shop, for they are scarce and hard to buy. The others are made by machinery, in the mills, dyed with commercial colors, and will fade."

I could not leave the little zerape, with its artistically blended colors, though it was much smaller than I should have wished, and proudly I bore it away.

In front of the cathedral, beggars of all sorts and descriptions, one or two of them with no legs, pleaded for alms. It was Saturday, and All Souls' Day, and beggars, generally restrained at other times, are licensed to ply their calling — for it is a profession here — on Saturdays and Sundays and feast days.

We looked in at the door, and stood for a moment uncovered within the darkened portals of the cathedral itself. Mass was over, and it was quite deserted and empty, save for two or three women penitents kneeling before the altar, an old peon, kneeling, who twice or thrice devoutly touched his lips to the floor; and just within the door an old woman at a table, displaying rosaries and charms for sale. The altar was a mass of brazen filigree, and the walls were adorned with horribly executed paintings of scriptural saints and scenes.

This reminds me that on the outskirts of Tepic there is a chapel especially blessed by God, who once performed there a wonderful miracle. Of the truth

of this there can be no doubt in the mind of any one that believes in such things, for the proof of it lies in plain, open sight of the world.

Once upon a time a padre, travelling through the country, reached this chapel late at night, and as the church was closed and the night was warm and balmy, he laid him down upon the naked earth outside to sleep. Now, as this padre was a very holy man he stretched his arms at right angles from his body, as he lay on his back and slept, thus cutting, with his body and arms, the form of the sacred Cross. Mark you, it was a sandy bit of earth upon which the padre lay, and never had a blade of grass grown upon it.

In the morning the most holy padre arose and went his way, but, behold! ere another day had dawned green grass sprang up where he had slept, and behold, too, his body and arms were outlined in the form of the Cross. Neither planted by the hand of man, nor watered nor trimmed by any but God's angels from heaven, that cross of grass grows to-day as green, as well cropped, and as fresh as the day it so miraculously sprang up. There it is, and the fact that it is there is proof enough for any man in his right mind of the truth of the story of its origin.

We walked through several of the principal streets, lined with houses that outwardly were grim, austere, and prison-like, but through open doors or windows glimpsed artistic furnishings within, and many charming gardens and inviting patios.

The stores frequently bore individual names or legends. One, a pawn-shop, for instance, was called "*La Voz del Pueblo*" (The Voice of the People) and offered to make loans at the modest rate of twelve

per cent per month. The pawn-shops are the constant resort of the peons, and every town has several of them. They are under the eye of the Government, and when unredeemed pledges are sold, should they bring more than the amount loaned upon them, with the agreed interest, the balance obtained from the sale is returned to the pledger.

There were a good many soldiers lounging about, and not very attractive looking ones either. Randall and I agreed that we would not care to meet them after dark in a lonely place. They were slouchy in appearance, in ill-fitting blue uniforms, and sandalled feet. The officers, however, were trim in neat uniforms.

Here the policemen were not so slouchy or dirty as in the other places we had visited, and they wore blue cloth uniforms. Randall and I were walking alone in the Alameda when I saw one separated and alone and unprotected, and a sudden desire came upon me to waylay and sample him with my camera.

"Randall," said I, "suppose you spring some of your Castilian on the cop, and while he is trying to decide whether you are speaking Arabic or German or Choctaw, I'll train my camera on him and get a picture."

Randall ignored my slur on his Spanish, and good-naturedly approaching the officer lifted his hat, and said (he translated the conversation for me afterward):

"My friend has a passion, señor officer, for taking photographs, and when I had the pleasure of calling his attention just now to your soldierly appearance and your watchful eye, and told him you were the finest looking officer we had seen in all Mexico, he immediately wanted to photograph you; but I could

not permit him to annoy you so far, señor officer, without first asking your permission. He is not altogether responsible, señor, and I have to watch him."

"It will be a pleasure to stand for a photograph for your friend, señor," replied the officer, politely lifting his hat. "Are you, then, the guardian of your friend? He is not crazy, I hope, señor?"

"Not very," assured Randall, "and he's always perfectly harmless under my restraining influence. I thank you, señor."

While Randall placed him in the sunlight and I bowed and scraped my acknowledgments to the officer for his courtesy, the humbug Randall was telling him that I was always trying to escape — that I might get away some time, — and asking him to take charge of me, and escort me to the hotel, if he should see me wandering about alone. I was wholly unconscious of the fact that the officer looked upon me indulgently as a harmless idiot, whose whim he was gratifying.

"They speak a lot better Spanish here than anywhere else we've been," remarked Randall as we walked away. "Now that policeman can talk Spanish almost as well as I can, and he understood all I said."

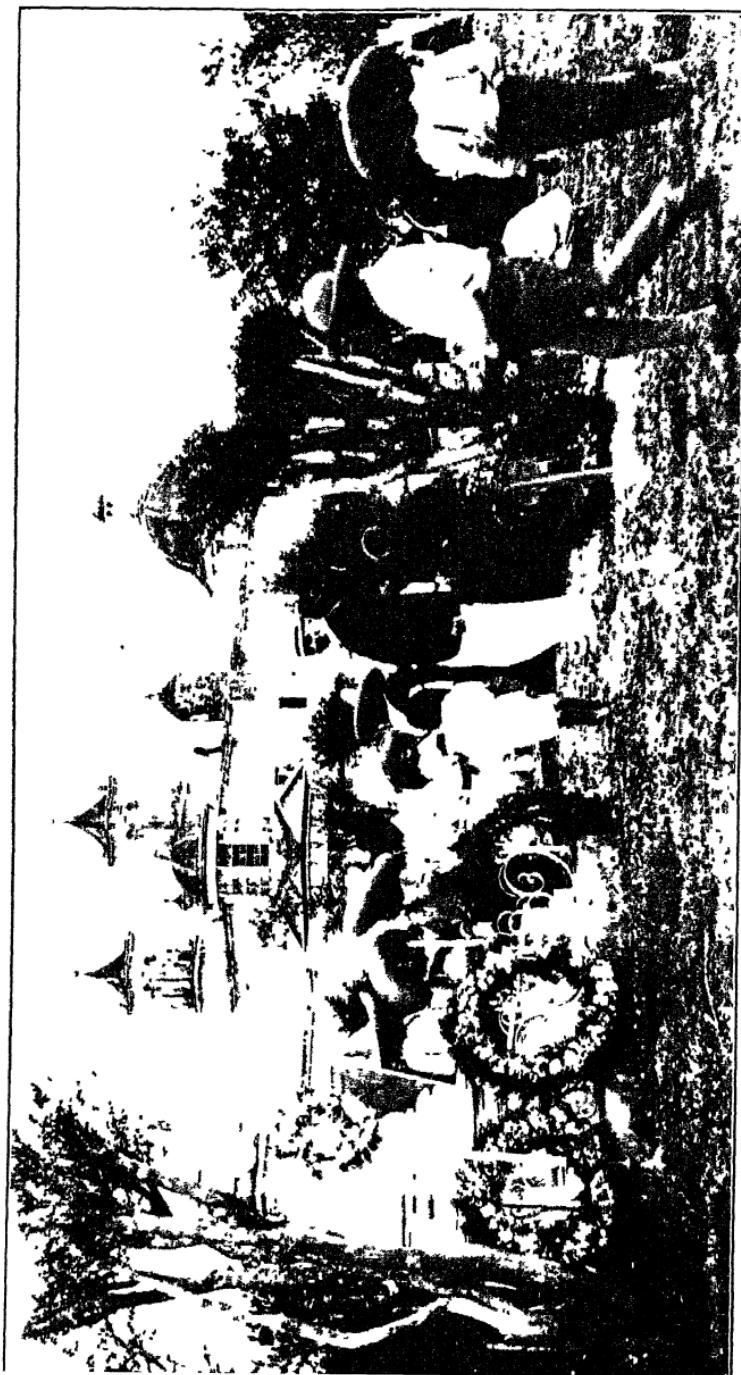
"Perhaps you're learning the dialect yourself," I suggested. "What did you tell him?"

"Well, one thing, I got even with you for poking fun at my Spanish," said he, and then he repeated it all to me, and seemed to think it was a good joke. I did not see the point, but I was careful after that not to wander in the neighborhood of the Alameda alone,



The policeman posed for his photograph

The cemetery and chapel, Tepic



for I had no wish to be taken under the kindly care and protecting arm of the gracious policeman.

We met the others of our party at the hotel, where we learned that Emerson was in trouble. He had several hundred dollars of United States gold which it was imperative he should exchange for Mexican currency, but his gold was spurned by all the banks. They simply would not touch the worthless stuff. As a last resort he was about to apply to a firm of German merchants, the largest and most extensive house in Tepic Territory. Mr. Eugen Hildebrand, the German Consul, who was a member of this firm, had been one of our fellow passengers on the steamer *San Jose*, and I determined to accompany Emerson in calling upon him in compliance with a promise to do so should I visit Tepic.

Mr. Hildebrand welcomed us cordially, exchanged Emerson's gold, and invited me to a noonday dinner at his home, suggesting that afterward we might take a drive, visit the cemetery and witness there the celebration of the fiesta of All Souls, and see the sights generally, an invitation which I promptly and heartily accepted.

The firm of which Mr. Hildebrand is the head owns large haciendas upon which coffee, tobacco, and the cocoa oil nut are grown and manufactured into marketable shape, as well as the many other profitable crops of the country, and where upward of fifteen hundred laborers are employed. In Tepic City they maintain a counting house and immense warerooms as the distributing point for their own produce and the general merchandise in which they deal.

Mr. Hildebrand's home was but a few doors away.

The house was a typical one of the best class, showing to the streets grim walls of bare masonry, and suggesting nothing of the charm and beauty, the refinement and culture, that lay behind the barred windows and heavy oaken doors. My host led me into a wide and airy room looking upon the patio garden massed with palms and blossoming flowers where song birds from their cages filled the air with melody. The room itself was semi-Oriental in its furnishings, and a delightful lounging place, with many books in English, German, and Spanish, some of them rare old works, to fit any mood and any inclination. Here we chatted for half an hour, until a mozo announced dinner.

The table was spread beneath a corner of the arched balcony of the patio, where we could enjoy the beautiful flowers and perfumed air while we ate. Coffee and cigars, grown and manufactured upon my host's own hacienda, followed the dinner. While we enjoyed them I took occasion to compliment him upon the very efficient service of the mozo who attended us.

"He 's been with me seven years," said Mr. Hildebrand, "and I like him particularly because he steals nothing but money."

The carriage, with a span of fine young mules, was waiting for us at the door, and we were soon rattling away over the round paving stones toward the scene of the fiesta celebration.

CHAPTER XII

THE FIESTA OF ALL SOULS

THE fiesta of All Saints had been celebrated the previous day, but this, the fiesta of All Souls, was the great occasion to those who were concerned with the quiet repose of the souls of departed friends, and who wished to pay tribute to their memory. People laden with flowers, attired in their cleanest and best, lined the road leading to the cemetery. Near the gate were venders of cakes and fruits, *pulque*, *mescal*, and other drinks.

Pulque, the ancient drink of the Aztecs, is the fermented sap of a species of maguay or century plant, and was a great favorite of the Aztecs in the days of Montezuma, as it is with their descendants in the days of Diaz. The centre of the plant is hollowed out to form a cup, in which sap gathers. The sap is sucked up with the mouth through a reed, ejected into a goatskin bag carried upon the back of the sap gatherers, deposited in a large tank, where a certain kind of earth is mixed with it to induce proper fermentation, and finally when strained is ready for consumption.

I must have a glass of it. Who interested in the Aztecs and their romantic history could pass it, the one surviving product of a dead civilization? With the Indians about me, dressed in their picturesque costumes, it was not hard to imagine myself back in the old days; this fiesta was a feast to one of the heathen

gods; this nectar was brewed by an aborigine who worshipped at the shrine of Quetzalcoatl, the god of the air. It was milky in appearance, and not attractive, and the first swallow was sufficient to dispel my illusion and make me pity the taste of the old heathens. It resembled in flavor a blend of mighty poor cider and sour milk.

Some of the natives had partaken too copiously of pulque and mescal, and had passed the bounds of strict sobriety. Mescal is the distilled sap of another variety of the maguay plant, and is a fiery liquor. I do not know how it affects the natives, but foreigners who drink much of it, for any length of time, are afflicted with a sort of brain dissolution,—an effect similar to that of absinthe,—and it is the curse of the young American who does not set himself firmly against its use. It has ended many a promising career. Many a future has been blighted by women and the seductive mescal, or *tequila*, as a more refined grade of the same liquor is called.

The cemetery was a mass of color. Flowers were in profusion. People attired in gaudy-hued clothing moved hither and thither amongst fantastic tombs, nearly all of which had been decorated with floral tributes. Crowds pressed in and out of a little chapel, where mass was being said, and candles were being lighted, for the repose of many souls. The poor peons deny and pinch themselves that they may have the money to purchase candles on these days, and bring them to the priest to be blessed and lighted at the altars; and many a cherished *zerape* or other article, necessary to the comfort of the owner, goes to the pawnbroker that funds may be raised for that purpose.

There are fiesta days when pigs, goats, cows, mules, and asses are brought to the priest also, to be blessed, to insure a bountiful increase. In the words of one of our writers on Mexico, "it is a very sweet and impressive service, reflecting the gentle simplicity of the peon and his padre." I suppose it is, but let one picture to oneself the sweet, sad gentleness of a priest solemnly blessing a refractory goat or pig, particularly if the excited goat plants his head in protest against the padre's stomach, as happened in one case I heard of; or the good padre, in sweet endeavor, trying to bestow his blessing upon a struggling, squealing, unwilling pig, the animal duly decorated with many-hued rags, and its hair gorgeously dyed impossible colors.

We halted before the tomb of the brigand governor Manuel Lozado, the last man to fight for the independence of the territory, and one of the last to offer armed resistance to the Diaz government. Loving hands had draped garlands upon his grave, and many an old man who had borne arms under the leadership of the brave old highwayman halted with uncovered head before the tomb. An edict of the Government forbids the very mention of his name, as a precaution to smother the sedition that memory of the brave deeds and bloody fights of upwards of thirty years ago might even yet engender; but there are some memories that edicts cannot smother, and sometimes public opinion is so strong that edicts and laws become inoperative. Boldly they have carved Lozado's name upon the tomb, and boldly they pay respect to it; and the eyes of the authorities are blind to what is done.

We cannot sympathize with Lozado's efforts against the Government, but whether he was impelled by personal motives or a misdirected patriotism, we can and must admire him. Between the years 1870 and 1877, this brigand patriot, if such an antithesis may be permitted in describing him, roused the Indian population in his cause, and actively conducted operations against the soldiers of Juarez, Lerdo, and finally against Diaz, through many bloody raids. In the latter year he attacked Guadalajara, was defeated, captured, and shot.

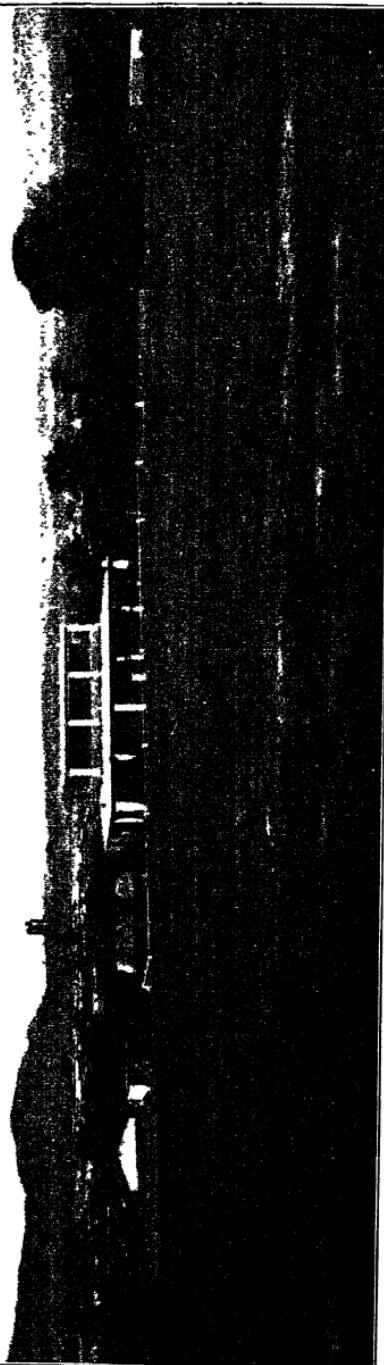
The payment of a slight tribute to Lozado's agents during his seven years' rule guaranteed to the traveller protection to life and property, and to him who paid tribute the country was free from the robberies of highwaymen, who subsequently for a time infested it, and made travelling dangerous and life uncertain. It is said that a large English house originally raised Lozado to power by supplying him with arms and ammunition, the English firm receiving important concessions in return for the aid rendered. It was Lozado's custom, when an extended campaign was contemplated, to destroy the banana trees, the chief source of food, and thus force the Indian population to join his forces and ravage the enemy's country for provision. In one of these raids Tepic City was attacked, and a desperate battle was fought on the plaza. The Hotel del Bolo de Oro was fortified, and in its capture the roof and gutters ran with blood.

There is a story told of Lozado's stern justice. A mule was once stolen from a train as it passed through the village of Espino — one of the small villages on the road between Navarrete and Tepic — and the



*“Boldly they have carved Lozado’s name upon
the tomb”*

A view over Tepic City



muleteer complained to Lozado's judge. The latter made no effort to find the thief and have the mule returned, and the matter was finally brought to the attention of Lozado himself. The chief made an immediate investigation, recovered the mule, and restored it to its owner, and then hung the thief and the delinquent judge, side by side, as an object lesson to the populace and officials.

In many of his raids upon the larger towns Lozado, it was known, acquired a large amount of treasure, which was supposed to have been concealed near Tepic City, but search has never disclosed it, and so far as is known it still lies buried and undiscovered.

A gay old highwayman was this Lozado, under whose despotic rule the peons were happy, for they enjoyed a greater degree of freedom than they had known since the coming of the conquerors, and still they love and revere his memory as a Moses who would have delivered them from bondage.

From the cemetery we drove out upon an eminence overlooking the city, and from this vantage-ground had an excellent view of Tepic, very attractive and beautiful, nestling there in the hollow of the mountains, its white buildings reflecting the bright light of the afternoon sun, the dark surrounding hills standing out in marked contrast. It was an entrancing view.

"Over there," remarked Mr. Hildebrand, "it is said the Indians used to have a rich gold mine. The legends tell us how they brought large quantities of gold, in dust and nuggets, to Tepic, and sold it for a song to the Spanish merchants; but they could never be prevailed upon to disclose the secret of the mine's

location. Men who followed them with stealth were led through rocky passes and canyons, and then eluded, and returned no wiser than before."

There is a legend about these Indians and their gold, and it may be of interest to repeat it here. It is called "*The Magic Scale and the Padre's Corn,*" and is as follows:

There lived in Tepic a hundred years or so ago a poor Spaniard of Mexican birth, who brooded much over his poverty and was very discontented and unhappy. Once this man's family was prominent and wealthy, but before he came into the world the wealth had slipped away, and he felt that fate had been hard with him. He was proud and he resented the circumstances that compelled him to labor as a menial, like a common peon. His home was a hovel, his food the meanest and poorest. Always he drudged and drudged. Only on the fiesta day of some good saint did he have leisure to rest and relax. "Bah! Rest? That was not rest." These were the thoughts that constantly filled his mind and made him unhappy. He was occupied with them one morning as he slouched along the street that skirts Tepic plaza on the south, where there were many shops in whose windows were displayed the good things of life that he craved. He paused before a jeweller's window to admire the pretty trinkets — rings, and chains, and precious stones. Finally his eyes rested upon a scale such as the jewellers used for weighing gold. It was a very ordinary scale, and he had seen similar ones a hundred times before, but for some unaccountable reason this one attracted and fascinated him.

For a long while he stood and gazed at the scale.

He took in its every outline. He counted the tiny weights that were piled by its side. Before his fancy's eye grew heaps of gold that in future years would be balanced upon the delicate instrument, gold that would buy anything,—fine houses, fine clothes, all the things for which he so longed. Suddenly some sprite whispered into his ear that if he could but gain possession of the scale all the gold that it was destined to weigh during its existence would be his. As he forced himself from the jeweller's window and hurried to his work, his brain was awhirl with the thought; and all day long as he labored the scale kept rising before his vision, and around him were piles of gold — gold that was his. He forgot his poverty and the present. His imagination carried him into a future state of wealth and luxury.

An ambition had been born to Jose — an ambition to own the scale. He vowed that with the help of his patron saint he would earn the money to purchase it. He would work harder than he had ever worked in his life. One of the most valuable possessions a man can have is an honest ambition — a future something to attain. Jose's new ambition, unreasonable as it may seem, brought to him energy, hope, and a fresh view of life. It crowded out the old broodings that were eating away his soul. For the first time within his remembrance he felt the thrill of hopeful happy existence.

On his way home in the evening he stopped again before the window of the plaza shop to feast his eyes upon the coveted scale, and the desire to handle and caress it, and call it his own, grew strong within him. When he reached home that night, he said to his wife:

"Good wife, I saw a jeweller's scale in a window as I went to work this morning, and as I came home to-night I saw it again, and it has charmed me. I must buy it and have it for my own."

"But, husband, what would you do with a jeweller's scale?" she asked. "It is a very foolish notion you have got into your head. It would be but a plaything for you, and you are not a child to have playthings. We have not the money to buy it. We need all you earn for bread."

"I do not know, wife, what I would do with it," he admitted, "but it has cast a spell over me. I shall never be happy until I own it. Something tells me it possesses a magic charm to make my fortune for me."

Day after day as Jose passed and repassed the shop window he stopped to gaze at the scale. More and more its fascination grew. He had now but one object in life — to possess the scale. He pinched and saved, bit by bit, and gradually his savings grew. It was hard, for his wages were small. He denied himself the simplest necessities of life, he starved himself; but he was happy, for the coins he saved were increasing in number. Every day he counted and gloated over his little hoard, and all the while was in mortal fear lest morning or evening the window would be empty; and each time when he saw his precious scale still there, his heart leaped with joy.

Weeks and months passed, and at length the fatal day arrived when he had enough money for his purpose. It was the happiest moment of his life when he stepped boldly into the jeweller's store and proudly bore away the coveted prize.

The scale finally in his possession Jose sought out the landlord of a small vacant shop not far away, and said to him:

"Señor, I want to rent your shop. I have no money to pay the rent, but this magic scale will make money for me, if only I have a place to house it, and then I can pay you."

"What are you to stock your shop with, Jose?" asked the landlord, who knew Jose well.

"I have nothing, señor, to stock it with, but this scale, and I need nothing else, for the scale is charmed and it will bring me much money."

"Well, Jose, as the shop is vacant you may go into it with your scale, to keep the rats away until I find a tenant."

So Jose set up his scale in the shop. Every morning before he went to work, and every evening as he returned, he spent an hour with his scale. He had acquired the habit of saving money. Gradually another stock of small coins accumulated, and he had them with him one evening as he sat in his shop admiring the scale, when an Indian entered.

"Do you buy gold, señor?" asked the Indian.

"*Si, señor,*" answered Jose, though he did not know why he answered so, for he had so little money.

The Indian offered some yellow dust. Jose weighed it on the scale, and gave the Indian all he had in exchange for it.

The following day he sold the dust at a large profit, and thenceforth went no more to work, but sat by his scale and waited for Indians to come with gold dust. Every day they came, and Jose, buying and selling, gradually grew rich. He lived in a fine house

now, he ate the best of food, he bedecked himself and his wife in good clothes and jewellery; he enjoyed all the things, in fact, that he had so envied others the possession of in the days of his poverty, and in the manner of humans, he looked with contempt upon his former peon companions.

But with riches came enlarged greed and dissatisfaction. Like most rich men, Jose wanted to be still richer. "Now," said he, "if I could only find the place where the Indians dig the gold, I could get it all for myself"; and he made every effort to induce them to disclose to him their secret, but they would not.

Then Jose bethought himself of a good padre who might help him, and to the good father he went with his plan. The padre was to be kind to the Indians and get their confidence, as only a padre can, and as their father confessor go with them to their mines and fathom the secret of where the gold was hidden. After this was accomplished Jose and the padre would gather great quantities of the gold and be richer than any in the land.

The good father thought it a very fine plan, and at once set about to ingratiate himself with the Indians. He worked well into their confidence, but the one thing he wished to know most of all they would not tell him. For a long while they were deaf to his entreaties to take him into the mountains with them. He told them how he loved them, and how lonely he was without them, and how very unkind it was of them to leave him behind when they went to their diggings.

All this had its effect in time upon the Indians, and

one day when they were preparing for a journey, they invited the padre to go with them, but required that his eyes be bandaged so that even he should not know the trail they travelled. This requirement was not agreeable to the good padre, but he had a plan. He filled his pockets with corn, and as he rode along on his ass he dropped a grain every few feet. "God has made this land fertile," said he to himself, "and the corn will grow, and in a few weeks I can trace the road by the green stalks."

When they reached the end of their journey, which was much shorter than he had expected, the padre's eyes were undone, and lo! he was by a stream in a canyon, and the bed of the stream was yellow! Before him lay a mass of shining, shimmering gold that could be gathered by the handful! The Indians permitted the good padre to feast his eyes, and presented him with several fine nuggets. They were in a part of the mountains where the padre had never been before. There was not a landmark that he could recognize, but as he rode back, blindfolded, upon the ass after several days' sojourn in the canyon, he slapped his back metaphorically, in deep satisfaction at the way he had outwitted the simple, unsophisticated Indians with his easy trick of the corn. Oh, yes! the corn would lead him there and then he would gather in all those riches for himself — and Jose, too, if he could not get rid of Jose.

Finally they reached the padre's home in Tepic, and when the blind was removed from his eyes there came a surprise. An Indian held out to him a bag and said:

"Good father, here is some corn you lost from your

pocket as you travelled. I gathered it up carefully for you, and it is all here."

One day not long after the padre's return, Jose was seen stealthily following the Indians to the mountains. Whether he found the golden stream or not no one ever knew. He did not return.

Down in the town Mr. Hildebrand and I traversed the chief streets and drove out to the mills where much of the native cotton is manufactured into the coarse fabrics worn by the peon class. Here is very good water power with which the mills are operated.

When I was at length set down at the hotel I found the others waiting for me. They announced that they had purchased tickets for the theatre, where a travelling dramatic company was to produce "El Soldado de San Marcial," a melodrama in five acts. Would I go? Of course I would. Like the others I wanted to see what a Mexican theatre was like.

CHAPTER XIII

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS

THE play was not to begin until eight o'clock, and with an hour and a half at our disposal, after supper we settled comfortably under the patio balcony to smoke and chat, in the hope that we might make the acquaintance of two other Americans whom we had glimpsed in the dining-room earlier in the evening. It gives one a homelike feeling to meet and exchange experiences with one's countrymen in a foreign land, where every one is speaking an alien tongue and has no interests in common with oneself. We were not disappointed in our expectations. The two gentlemen presently strolled along, as we had hoped they would, apparently as anxious to meet us as we were to meet them, and mutual introductions put us quickly upon terms of goodfellowship.

One was a nephew of the famous Confederate Colonel Mosby, and himself an engineer who had been more or less closely connected with all the great railroad operations in Eastern Mexico. He was at the time one of the chief engineers superintending the running of lines for the new Southern Pacific extension through Western Mexico. For several weeks Mr. Mosby had been stationed in the miasmal swamps of the lower country, where he had contracted calentura, and he had now come to Tepic to convalesce

and recuperate his strength. The other was a miner, a devil-may-care sort of fellow, named McKenna, who announced that fate had thrown him into Tepic five years before, and he had not been able to get away since because his mule went lame, and he would not risk his life in the stage. He was loafing around and waiting for the railroad to come and take him home to the United States.

At Hildebrand's they had expressed a strong lack of faith in ever seeing the railroad in Tepic; but the Germans in Mexico are extremely jealous of American enterprise, and decry American projects on every occasion. They can hardly be blamed for this, for it is hard to see another nation making inroads upon trade that has been built up through years of effort and which has become more or less monopolized. Mosby assured me, however, that all the doubts were without basis, that the last survey had been made, and the location engineers were now rushing their final work through; that track was being laid in the north, a large construction camp erected at Mazatlan, and all the funds in hand to carry the work to quick completion. This I later verified.

McKenna, noticing that I filled my pipe with tobacco from cigarettes, exclaimed:

"What, no pipe tobacco! Come with me and I'll show you where to get the finest weed cut you ever turned into smoke."

"I did n't know there was any to be had in this part of the country," I explained.

"Yes," said he, "there are two or three of us gringos here most of the time, and we had to have pipe tobacco, so we sent all the way to New Orleans for a tobacco

cutter, presented it to a cigar maker, and instructed him how to cure and cut the tobacco."

He took me down across the plaza into a side street and into a small shop, and introducing me to the Mexican tobacconist requested him to sell me a kilo from the precious *Americano* brand. For the kilo — something over two pounds — I paid the ridiculously low price of one peso, and with it made many a longing American happy all the way from Tepic to Durango, besides having plenty for my own use, for it was very strong and a little of it went a long way.

As McKenna and I strolled back along the poorly lighted outskirts of the square, he stopped to purchase some limes from an old woman squatting upon the sidewalk.

"*Dos reales, señora,*" said she.

"Look at me, *señora*," requested McKenna, in Spanish, "Look at me and see who I am, and then tell me the price."

She looked, and the price at once dropped from twenty-five to three centavos.

"The old *señora*," explained McKenna, as we walked away, "knows me well, and is aware that I know the price of things, but she had heard your party was in town, and in the dark she thought I was one of you. It's always the way with them. Three centavos was the regular market price for those limes. Innocent gringos need a guardian to save them from being fleeced when they travel in Mexico."

The performance at the theatre was billed to begin at eight o'clock, and we reached there a little ahead of time, for we wished to see the people come in, and to study the styles. The playhouse is a new one,

and the most modern building in Tepic. Its filigree work and newness, however, do not harmonize well with the old, substantial structures surrounding it, and it rather grates upon one's sensibilities and notion of the fitness of things. It is called the "Teatro Porfirio Diaz," in honor of the President.

Along the sidewalk soldiers were drawn up, giving the coming performance an air of importance, and the ever present venders lined the sidewalk, offering cakes and other edibles for sale, while the usual mob of zerape-clad men filled the street.

At the door our tickets were taken and we were turned over to the usher, a unique character, who attempted to assume the reckless bearing of the American cowboy, as that individual is pictured in fiction. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and wore a soft felt hat well back upon his head and to one side, while he swaggered up and down with an air of bravado and importance pleasant to see, and which made him a feature of the entertainment. We were seated, at our request, in the centre of the orchestra, a position that gave us an opportunity to view the arrivals. The orchestra was filled with rough wooden benches, but the boxes on both sides of the orchestra floor and surrounding the first balcony were void of seating accommodations. The occupants brought their own chairs with them.

We were the first arrivals, but presently the audience began to file in. In the orchestra seats, where we were, the men did not remove their big sombreros, until after the performance had begun, but in the boxes they were more polite in this respect. A young lieutenant, gold lace, sword and all, occupied one of

TEATRO "PORFIRIO DIAZ"

Compañía Cómico-Lírica-Dramática ANITA MARTINEZ,

Bajo la dirección del primer actor señor ANTONIO VICO.

Domingo 3 de noviembre de 1907.
DOS GRANDES FUNCIONES.

POR LA TARDE, el grácilissimo drama en 7 actos

DON JUAN TENORIO.

Con el mismo REPARTO:

OJO! ¡A mitad de precios! OJO!

Platós y Palcos los.	\$ 3.00	Galería	\$ 0.15
Luneta con entrada	0.30	Números delanteros de galería	0.05
Palcos 2os con entrada	0.30		



POR LA NOCHE

El interesante melodrama en cuatro actos y un prólogo, inspirado en una antigua leyenda, titulado:

EL SOLDADO

DE

SAN MARCIAL

REPARTO:

Magnífica	Sra. ANITA MARTINEZ.	Juan Guillén	Señ. VICO.
Niña Linda	Niña N.	Lázaro (Conde de la Ujar)	Señ. Huertas.
Valentino	Sra. Berumen.	Marqués de Udaliz	Señ. López.
Marquesa	Sra. Genís.	Roberto	Señ. Martínez.
Directora de Santa Teresas	Sra. Vilá.	Escena Portera	Señ. Nolla.
Pepa	Sra. Genís (II).	Un Alcalde	Señ. Berumen.
Antona	Sra. Berumen.	Un sargento	Señ. Berumen.



TÍTULO DE LOS ACTOS.

1.º El gaseíno.—2.º La acusación.—3.º La cuerda de presidios.—El falso Conde de la Ujar.

5.º Rehabilitación del inocente y castigo del malvado.

Dando fin la función con la bonita comedia en soto, de Miguel Echegaray, desenmascarada.

Champagne Frappé

Desempeñador por las señoras Anita Martinez, Martínez (C) y el señor Vico.

¡Ojo á los precios de entrada!!

Platós y Palcos los. con 5 entradas	\$ 6.00
Luneta	0.75
Palcos 2os. con entrada	0.40
Galería	0.20
Números delanteros de Galería	0.10

Siguen encantadoras las hermosísimas obras

Juan José. La Mujer Adultera y Chubro el Roto.

En breve beneficio de la Sra. Anita Martinez, con lo sublime
ZARZUELA de género dramático y que tantos aplausos le ha valido
á la Sra. MARTINEZ, desenmascarada

LA TRAPERAS.

Fac-simile of playbill for performance at Teatro
“Porfirio Diaz”

the lower boxes nearly opposite our seats. The *élite* of Tepic society filled the boxes, — ladies in flimsy white dresses, lace mantillas on their heads, and plenty of powder on their faces to modify their complexions, chatting with their escorts, and full of vivacity. We soon learned that the orchestra seats were tabooed by society, and we were amongst the outcasts, the common plebeians of a class just above the peon. It was nearly nine o'clock before the music struck up, and then began stamping of feet, clapping of hands, shouting and cat calls from the gallery. It was the same old gallery we all know. One finds it in New York, in San Francisco, and here in Mexico without a whit of difference in make-up. In this respect, at least, all cities, all nations, all races are akin.

At nine o'clock the curtain rose. On the stage black-cloaked men, their faces concealed to the eyes, sat on chairs and talked and talked. Then a woman came in and talked, and a priest or two, but there was little or no action during the first two acts. Things woke up a bit then, and they began to kill one another off, to the delighted howls of the gallery. Before the bloody scenes opened some one came down to the lieutenant in the box and borrowed his sword, with which to slay villains, and the sword was gladly loaned. They did the killing solemnly and with precision, usually in polite terms informing the victim that he was about to die, while the dead ones reappeared in changed costumes, to be slain again. After seven apparently inoffensive people — but, I suppose, really dark-dyed villains — had been sacrificed, some of them twice or thrice, we withdrew. It is sad to see a man die more than once, very sad, even if he

is a bad man. The sadness impressed itself upon us to such an extent that copious tears trickled down the hardened cheeks of Emerson and Randall as we filed out at half-past twelve in the morning. We could stand no more of it. Four more had to die, and there was no telling how long it would take to dispose of them. We heard the people going home at something after two o'clock, however, so they apparently slaughtered the last batch of victims in a hurry.

Sunday morning Randall, Bigelow, and I looked up the post-office. Randall declined to go in with me to act as interpreter — I had cast too many reflections on his Spanish — so, thrown upon my own resources, I entered the building and approached the stamp window. A good-natured señorita came forward.

"Buenos días, señorita," I remarked pleasantly. "Tray deuces and tray cincos." I thought she ought to understand that.

"Buenos días, señor," said she, and something else I did not catch.

"Postales tray stamps and letra tray."

She looked at me mystified, and timidly asked me something. I did not know what she asked, but the way she looked at me made me forget to talk Spanish, and I blurted out,

"Madam, may I have three two-cent and three five-cent stamps?"

"Oh, si, señor," said she smiling. "I knowa the Ingles but nota the French."

I bought my stamps and enjoyed a pleasant chat with her. She told me that she had studied a little English and could understand it very well, though she knew she could not speak it nicely. I assured

her she spoke it with a very pretty accent, but I had not sufficient temerity to confess that it was Spanish, not French, in which I had attempted to address her.

Upon our return to the hotel, we found Ramos there. He brought us the startling information that cholera had broken out at Mazatlan — startling because we were to go there, and it would be inconvenient to be held up by a tedious quarantine. However, it was only a rumor as yet, and there would be plenty of time to verify it.

There was music that evening in the plaza, and all the town came out to hear it, as is the custom. These musical evenings — Wednesday and Sunday — are the times for visiting and gossiping, flirting and love-making by the people of high and low degree alike. The bandstand is in the centre and seats are distributed at convenient intervals among the trees and flowery bowers of the plaza, while benches line the two walks that surround it. One of these walks is used by the "big hats," or peons, the other by the "big bugs." We walked with the "big bugs." When the band plays, the people promenade; when it ceases they sit down upon the benches, to chat until the music strikes up again. Each class keeps upon its respective walk. The women promenade in one direction, the men in the other, and an opportunity is thus given for flirtations and exchange of glances as they meet. If a "big hat," by any chance, is bold enough to appear upon the "big bug" side, he is promptly recommended by a "big bug" or a policeman to disappear, which he usually does forthwith, for he knows by experience that the recommendation is made for the benefit of his health, and he regards his health.

In the uncertain illumination of the electric lights some of the señoritas appeared very attractive in breezy, fluffy gowns and fetching mantillas, and they knew it pretty well, too. They like to have you look at them directly and admiringly, and they will not drop their eyes. If you have the nerve to give one a look of this kind — such a look as would be considered extremely rude in any American city — the chances are, when you meet her on the next turn you will be rewarded with a smile and a challenge from the black eyes, and if you have a stock of nerve in reserve, you will speak to her and pay her some complimentary remark upon the first opportunity that offers. This is good breeding and will not be resented. Should you then become infatuated with the lady, you will search out her home, visit her barred window and mope under it for an hour or so every morning; and if you impress her favorably she will make your heart glad by talking with you through the bars, or handing little scented notes to you. Should you become really serious, you will hire a stringed band to serenade her at night, now and then.

We were particularly impressed in Tepic, and later at Santiago Ixcuintla, by the mournful character of the music. Much of it leaves with one the impression that it is the lamentation of a heart filled with sorrow and woe. Amongst the peons of Tepic Territory one seldom sees a smiling face. Especially is this true of the women. I can now recall but one smiling, happy woman's face that I saw there, and that was the round-faced señorita at our Navarrete hotel. Mrs. Wallace told me that she had done much charitable visiting amongst them, and almost universally

the peon women that she knew, her servants included, had expressed the wish that they were dead, and she was certain only their religion prevents many of them from resorting to self-destruction. They are slaves — slaves to the men, who are hard masters, — slaves to the world at large. Their life is one of constant struggle, and there is little of joy or pleasure that they ever know. Work from daylight till dark, then sleep, then work again, with never a day of rest or recreation in all the tedious years. "Our forefathers committed a great sin, and we are doing penance for it," said one. "Long, long ago our people possessed the land, and the fruits and flowers were theirs, and they were happy and gay. Then they committed this sin, and the Lord God punished them for it. He took away the lands, and made them work as slaves for other men. We are doing penance for that sin still, but some time we shall come into our own again. Perhaps it is not for us, but our children or our children's children."

I wonder if the mournful music is an echo of this feeling? I wonder if the Lord God ever intended the bloodthirsty Spaniards to avenge wrongs done Him? I wonder if the Mexican Government will ever throw open to the peons the broad, fertile acres of idle jungle, and make of these people home-builders and thrifty farmers?

CHAPTER XIV

COMEDY AND TRAGEDY OF THE TRAIL

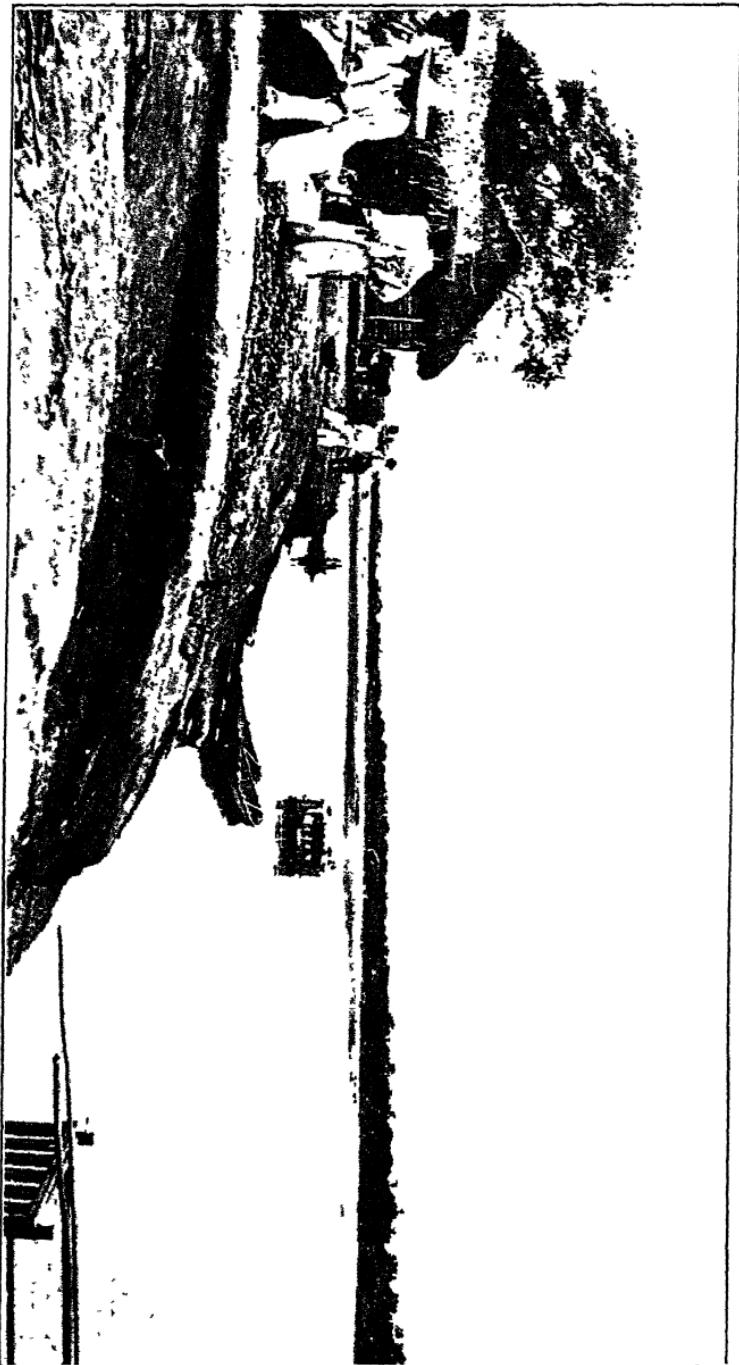
MIGUEL had our horses in the hotel patio, all saddled and bridled, in good season on Monday morning, and, breakfast eaten, we mounted and rode away with some regret, from the clear, cool atmosphere of this delightful old mountain town, to return to the humidity and heat of the lower altitudes.

The morning was fine and invigorating, our horses fresh after a two days' rest, and we trotted out at a smart pace upon the road to Navarrete, chatting gayly of our experiences as we rode. Over to the westward we could see the mountains that hid securely the rich gold mines from which the Indians used to bring the nuggets and gold dust, which the padre had so vainly endeavored to locate by subterfuge, and we laughed as we thought of the good man's embarrassment when his corn was returned to him with so much apparent innocence by the simple, unsophisticated Indian. At Espino we remembered the story of Lozado's execution there of the judge and the thief, and at San Louis, another village by the way, we saw a cliff over which the same Lozado used playfully to suspend federal prisoners at the ends of ropes.

We noticed at intervals by the roadside small cairns, each of them surmounted by a cross. These, we were told, indicated places where people had met sudden

death. One of the crosses, of quite recent origin, marked the spot where a woman had fallen over a cliff one night. She was a passenger in the stage-coach, and to relieve herself from a cramped position in the *diligencia* descended from the vehicle to walk up a steep incline. The road here overhangs a precipice, and in the darkness the unfortunate woman, failing to see the danger, ventured too near the edge and was hurled to instant death upon the rocks below. The good-natured stage-driver erected the cross to commemorate the occasion, and I suppose it quieted any qualms of conscience he may have felt for his own lack of care of his passengers.

It was early in the afternoon when we reined up at Navarrete, but too late to attempt the still miry road to Santiago Ixcuintla in the darkness, which would certainly overtake us before reaching there, so we accepted a hearty invitation to spend the night at the now familiar hostelry. Our good friends who presided over it had learned to feel a sort of proprietary interest in us. I took advantage of the sunlight that still remained to use my camera, and the round-faced laughing señorita asked many questions about it in Spanish, which I could not understand. I took her by the hand and led her outside, where I could place her in position for a portrait, though she evinced some fear and hesitancy at undergoing the ordeal. Gates good-naturedly put his sombrero upon her head, and when I made my exposure with no dire results, and she found she had survived it unscathed, she was mightily pleased. I thanked her cordially, and told her, through Gates, as interpreter, that I should see her again and have great pleasure in presenting to



The ferry at Santiago Ixcuinitala

Gardens of tuna cactus



her a copy of the photograph, a thing which she did not understand, for she had never seen a photograph, but which I have no doubt she looked forward to with much impatience and interest. She was certain, she assured me, it must be something wonderful.

At Navarrete we found a Mexican Jew with his mozo, *en route* from Tepic to Santiago Ixcuintla in a two-wheeled cart drawn by a horse. The Jewish gentleman was of enormous proportions. Randall regretted the fact that he had no moving picture machine to photograph the pair, when we saw the mozo dressing his master in the morning. The performance would certainly have brought down any American house had it been possible to preserve it on films for future exhibition. They started from Navarrete long before daylight, and we overtook them later in dire straits. The cart was stuck fast in the middle of a mud-hole, the Jew would not get out of the vehicle into the mire, and he was emitting loud and voluble Spanish phrases, with intonations that suggested profanity; but my unfamiliarity with the language precludes my saying that the utterances were not entirely what they should have been under the circumstances. The mozo was just returning from a near-by ranch house with a couple of borrowed mules, to snake the outfit to dry land, and we halted to make certain that the unfortunate one was duly rescued before we rode on. We did not see them again, and whether they met with further mishaps I cannot say.

At nine o'clock in the morning we crossed the ferry into Santiago Ixcuintla, and even at that early hour the heat had become so intense that Randall developed a dizziness that caused me some concern, and made

necessary a short halt to rest and cool off before proceeding the fifteen miles to the ranch.

Here we learned incidentally that an officer, badly wounded by bandits, had just been brought in from the hills for surgical treatment. There was no noticeable excitement over the occurrence, such as one might expect in a small town like this, upon such an event, and it seemed rather to be accepted as a matter of course, and all in a day's work.

Back in the hills, a noted bandit had been holding up travellers and occasionally shooting one. He had seventeen murders charged against him, of which he was very proud, it was said. Two or three days before our arrival, a report came to Santiago Ixquintla that this gentleman was operating much nearer the town than usual, and an officer, with a posse, was despatched to round him up. The officer posted his men near the point where the brigand was supposed to be stopping, and with one man rode down the trail to reconnoitre. Suddenly and unexpectedly he came upon the desperado, with a companion, and instantly gun-play commenced. When the fight was over the officer was badly shot up, his man was dead, the chief desperado was dead, and the other bad man had disappeared in the direction of the mountains.

It may be said that there are not many of these occurrences now. The Rurales, or mounted police, have pretty nearly put a stop to brigandage. Several years ago, during the presidency of Comonfort, the Government recognized the wisdom of the old adage "Set a thief to catch a thief," and offered pardon and protection to all brigands who would come in and enlist as Rurales. Most of them took advantage of

the offer, and with these men on the side of law and order, holdups soon became infrequent, and the Rurales developed into a wonderfully efficient mounted force to hunt down bandits. They are fearless riders, they know every mountain pass and fastness, and when they once start after a man he is pretty sure to be caught or killed — generally killed. The Rurales of Mexico compare favorably in bravery and reckless daring with that wonderful organization, the Northwest Mounted Police of Canada, and are by far the best armed force in Mexico. Their calling gives them opportunity for wild adventure, and thus satisfies the craving for a life of danger, which in the first instance led many of them to be brigands. They are a free and easy lot, quite in contrast to the peaceably inclined policemen of the towns, and the slow-moving, indolent soldiery of the regular army. Their pay is ten *reales* (sixty-two and one-half cents) a day, out of which they provide their own living and forage for their horses.

In the fields some distance beyond the point where the ranch trail left the main road to follow the river, we were treated to a fine exhibit of horsemanship. A body of fifteen or twenty Mexican cowboys, or *vaqueros*, as they are called, were just finishing a round-up of cattle. Their mounts were magnificent animals and well trained, and it was a rare entertainment to see them dashing in and out and over the rough ground, the men swinging their lariats, roping cattle with unerring precision, and the horses bracing, to hold and throw the steer or cow.

That night as we sat upon the patio veranda of the Hacienda San Nicolás we became sensible of a plain-

tive chanting in the direction of the Indian village. We had heard it on one or two previous evenings, before our excursion to Tepic, but, supposing it to be a vent to the musical inspiration of the natives, had not investigated it. This evening, however, it continued for an unusually long time without variation, and inquiry was made as to its meaning. Kaiser informed us that a rehearsal was in progress every night until midnight for a play to be given during the Christmas fiesta. This was interesting, and we all walked out to witness the performance.

Under the trees in the Indian village a weird and picturesque scene met our view. At a small table sat a man with an open book before him, while in a semicircle before him stood all the men and women of the village, and within the semicircle, directly in front of the man, two youths were sparring with sticks, and at the same time chanting sentences after the man who read from the book. All the men were wrapped in their colored zerapes, and a single torch shed an uncertain, flickering light upon the scene, showing bare heads and dark faces in outline. They were intensely in earnest, and the spectacle reminded one of savages performing some rite. It was a scriptural allegory they were rehearsing. One of the men with sticks represented an angel, the other the devil, and the angel was fighting the devil. I think the devil was vanquished, though we did not stay to see the result.

CHAPTER XV

AMONGST THE LAGUNAS

DOWN by the sea, hidden amongst a maze and network of lagunas, some leagues north of San Blas, lies the ancient Indian village of Mexcaltatan. You will not find it on the map, and you will find no mention of it in the official reports of Mexico, for in that respect, at least, this unique relic of the past seems to have been quite forgotten by the Government, though its shrimp fisheries make it, perhaps, the most important town of its size in the Republic.

Mexcaltatan was originally built upon piles and hidden in this secluded spot amongst the myriad of lagunas, which are characteristic of this section of the western coast, to protect it against the warlike Indians of the mainland, just as Tenochtitlan was built upon piles in Tezcoco Lake as a safe retreat from the surrounding tribes with which the Aztec founders were at war. Tradition says that the town was founded by the Aztecs, in the course of their migration to the southward, and that it is therefore older than Mexico City. Of this no man can know for a certainty. The Spaniards and their priests of the Conquest, in blind, unreasoning bigotry, so effectually destroyed all records of ancient Mexico that the country's history is veiled behind a curtain of deepest mystery through which no eye can see, and her past will forever remain silent. But one is brought very close indeed, in fancy,

at least, to those forgotten ages, and that vanquished people, as one traverses to-day the streets of this Mexican Venice in primitive dugout canoes, in the same manner as her founders did those centuries ago, and realizes that it is the only one of the old pile-built villages now remaining on the North American continent.

All plans for an expedition there, including arrangements for a canoe to meet us at the end of the mainland trail, had been made by Kaiser during our absence in Tepic. He, Randall, Emerson, and I, with our mozo Miguel, rode out to Santiago Ixcuintla the afternoon following our return, putting up that night at the Hotel Sur Pacifico, in order that we might be well on the road and get away in good season in the morning, for we wished, if possible, to reach Mexcaltatan before dark the next evening. We knew nothing of the character of the trails, and could only calculate approximately the distance, or the time that would be required for the journey.

This was the first of our trips upon which Kaiser had joined us, and a jolly good companion he proved. He knew every peasant on the road, and every shopkeeper and official in town. For this one he had a pleasant word, for that one a jovial greeting, and for another a courteous bow, or the Mexican embrace. In his ten years' wanderings over the country he had visited nearly every town of importance, and wherever he went was sure to make friends. He proved a master of suavity, polite compliments, or bluff cordiality, as circumstances demanded. A German by birth, he could speak English as perfectly as his mother tongue, with scarcely a noticeable accent, and he had at his command all of our latest, up-to-date slang phrases,

which he would use copiously at one moment and the next would perhaps be quoting some ancient classic or expounding philosophy. His father is a professor in a German university, and he is himself a university-bred man. His Spanish is as good as his English, and he understands, also, three or four of the native Indian dialects.

We engaged a native to guide us to the Mexcaltatan canoe landing, and in the fresh, dewy morning rode forth from Santiago Ixcuintla on the trail to the sea. In mid-forenoon, and near the siesta hour, we passed through the ancient town of Santos Pac, where a Spanish convent, long since deserted, lies in picturesque ruins. The hovel-lined streets of the village were empty, save for an occasional dog which wearily foraged for refuse. "Only dogs and gringos," say the Mexicans, "have so little sense as to expose themselves to the burning rays of a tropical midday sun."

For a considerable distance beyond Santos Pac the trail was well shaded by a dense growth of ferns and palms and tropical trees, to the point where we entered the naked *marismas* to flounder down over a miry stretch to the water's edge. Here stood a scrubby and solitary tree, under the uncertain shade of which we deposited our belongings and stretched ourselves to breathe the grateful salt air and await the expected canoe, while our guide and mozo returned with the horses to Santos Pac, with instructions to come for us at three o'clock the following day.

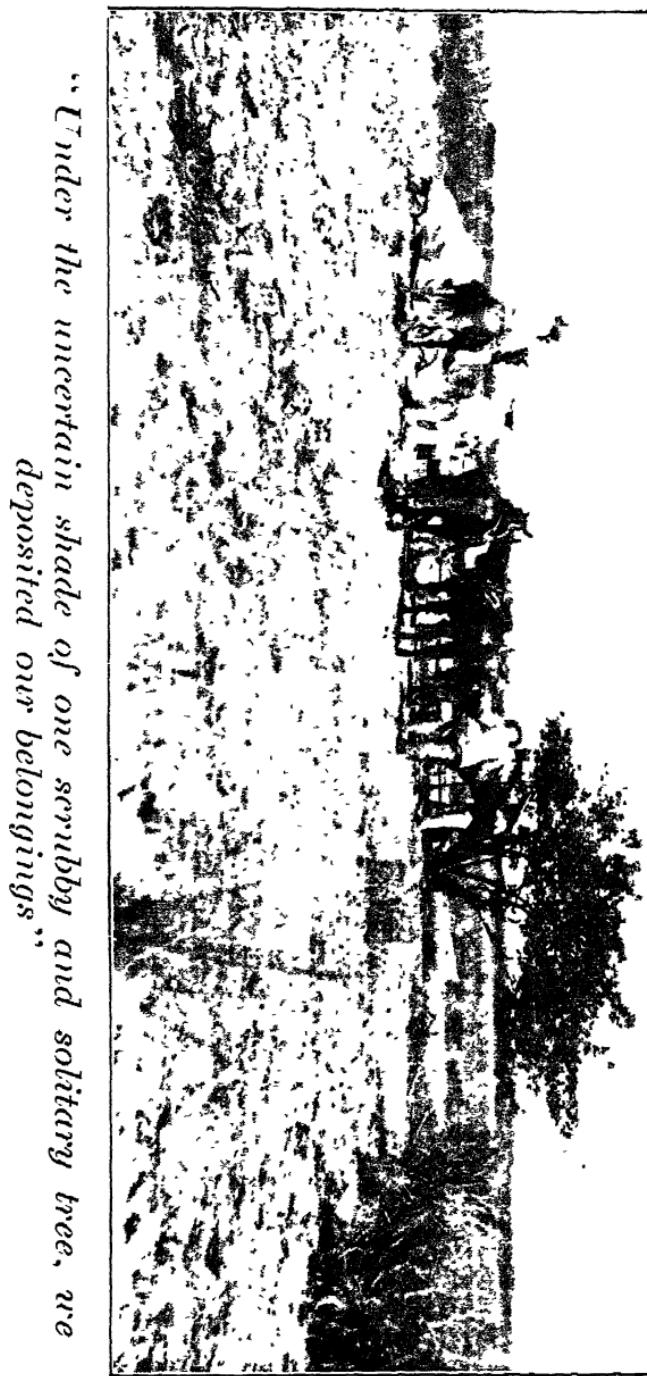
A bare-legged Mexican in a dugout canoe was just poling away with a cargo of merchandise for Mexcaltatan, and we sat and watched him disappear around a turn in the laguna. No other life was visible in the

wide stretch of swamp, which reaches away toward the distant mountains rising in blue grandeur to the eastward.

These low lands, termed *marismas*, are characteristic of the Tepic and Sinaloa coasts. During the rainy period they are subject to inundation by high tides and the overflow of rivers. When the rains cease, at the close of September, the powerful rays of the tropical sun quickly dry them, and then the few trails that lead down from the upland to the sea become passable for mules, though generally muddy and difficult to traverse. The marismas are ideal breeding-places for mosquitoes, and at all times reek with malarial germs, and are exceedingly unhealthful. Behind them the foothills rise and bank away into the lofty ranges of the Sierra del Nayarit and the Sierra de Alicia, which extend north and south through the centre of Tepic Territory, in continuation of the Sierra Madres.

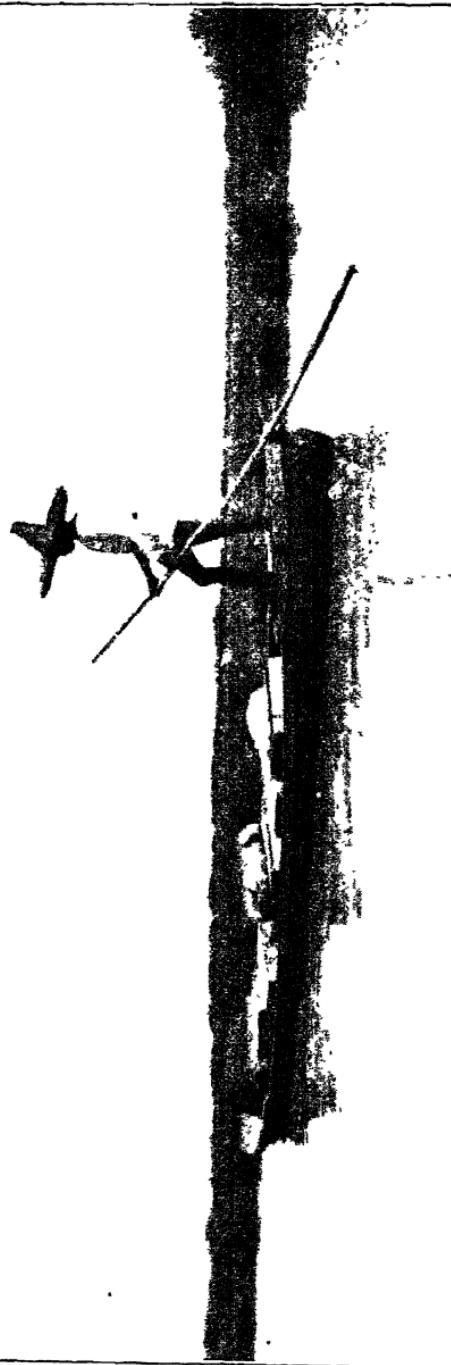
Our scrubby tree offered but indifferent protection from the sun's rays, mosquitoes were exceedingly annoying, and our position was becoming anything but pleasant, when, at the end of half an hour, an Indian suddenly appeared as though he had risen out of the earth. From a grass-thatched shed a little distance away he had observed us, and in kindly hospitality came to our relief. Would the señors wait for their canoe under the poor shelter of his roof? It was very hot out here in the open swamp. Certainly we would, and we were very grateful for his thoughtfulness of our comfort.

The Indian was the custodian of a store of dried shrimps, which were piled under his thatched shed to



"Under the uncertain shade of one scrubby and solitary tree, we deposited our belongings"

"In a dugout canoe, poling away with a cargo of merchandise"



await transportation by mule train to the interior markets. They were put up in bales of one hundred and fifty pounds encased in palm leaves and tied with ropes of twisted fibre. We had eaten no dinner, and thankfully accepted our host's invitation to help ourselves to shrimps. They were well cured, and with sharpened appetites after our morning's ride, we found them exceedingly palatable.

It was three o'clock when two canoemen came for us with a large dugout. They had been sent by a merchant of the town, a friend of Kaiser's who formerly resided in Tepic City, where Kaiser had known him, and brought a message of greeting and welcome. We were soon seated in the bottom of the commodious craft, and with one man at the bow and one at the stern poled out through a laguna into a wide basin.

The water was teeming with fish, which jumped constantly on every side. Indeed it was not unusual, our guides informed us, for fish to jump into canoes. Water fowl were everywhere, and there would have been no difficulty in bagging a boatload of duck, had we desired; but we were not on a hunting expedition, and they were left undisturbed.

At the end of an hour our canoe entered a maze of beautiful lagunas. With tropical foliage rising high above our heads on either side, we wound our way in and out amongst them, until finally we burst through into a wider space to behold *La Laguna de los Siete Cielos* — The Lake of the Seven Heavens. The banks were lined with beautiful lavender-hued water-lilies, small islands of them floating loose, and the air was charged with their delicate perfume. This lily is known as *La Reina del Agua* (The Queen of the Water),

and certainly deserves its name. From this point it lined our way with a profusion of blossoms. We were told that the lilies were brought down in masses by the rivers from interior lakes, during the rainy season floods — chiefly through the Santiago Rio from Lake Chapala — and floated into the lagunas when the marismas was flooded.

Peering into the clear waters of *La Laguna de los Siete Cielos*, one sees at the bottom what is apparently an immense pile of silver money. Gravely our canoe-men informed us that it was in fact real money, but lying in a place *encantado* (enchanted) it was transformed into shells when brought to the surface. Only those who possess the proper charm can bring the silver up unchanged. Long, long ago it was lost there by a Spanish boat, and the spirits of the water enchanted it, and, no man ever learning the secret and necessary charm to enable him to recover it unchanged, it lies there still.

In and out we turned amongst the entrancing lagunas, once passing through a long arch of mangroves called by the natives "*El Cañon*." No one canoe-man knows all of these waterways, and it could easily be imagined how a stranger might become hopelessly entangled and lost among them. Each has its individual name, like the street of a city, and is called a *calle* (street). Trained from early youth, the native boatman learns one section only, and never ventures beyond his known lagunas unattended.

Soon we saw the *cimaron* (shrimp) nets, some of twisted reeds, some of twine, and then suddenly swung into a lake in the centre of which, lying low in the water, appeared the village of Mexcaltatan.

CHAPTER XVI

MEXCALTATAN, THE MEXICAN VENICE

MEXCALTATAN is built in the form of a cart-wheel, with the plaza for a hub, and canals, lined with huts of reeds and poles, reaching up to it like spokes from the outer rim of water. Very picturesque and entrancing the little town looked as we approached. The sun was just dropping behind the lagunas to the westward, lighting the tops of graceful cocoanut palms, which rose high above the plaza, and setting on fire the red-tiled roofs of gray huts below, while murky canals beneath lay in deep and sombre shadow. A bit of old Mexico, solitary and alone, untouched and unmarred by the march of civilization, it seemed to breathe something of the mystery of the forgotten days of its founders.

It was six o'clock when we landed. The tide was out, and the canals were now naked black mud and mire. Under the guidance of the canoemen, we picked our way along a footpath that followed one of the canals to the plaza, and to the store of Kaiser's friend, Señor Fortunato Martin. Señor Martin saw us coming, and met us at the door with a most sincere welcome. He and Kaiser fell upon each other's necks, and embraced, before our formal introduction took place.

When we were finally made acquainted with our host we deposited our artillery under his counter, as

a mark of confidence in him, and to show the world in general that we were not afraid even without the protecting influence of firearms. Then we took our way across town, to a hut where supper had been engaged for us.

Our arrival had been heralded broadcast. Before we had gone a block our progress resembled a circus band-wagon parade, and I believe every child in the town was at our heels. They had never seen a white man before, nor people attired so strangely, and we were veritable curiosities. We might have gone on exhibition, and charged an admission fee, with profitable results.

At the hut where we were to eat, a talkative iron-gray señora received us, and bade us in Spanish, "Sit down — supper would be ready soon." She was quite puffed up with pride that she should have the honor of entertaining us, and was plainly the envy of two or three neighbor women, who were with her when we came, but hurried away upon our entrance, doubtless to notify the folk at home to come and have a peep at the curious-looking strangers. We had hardly seated ourselves when we discovered the place to be surrounded on all sides by a crowd of men, women, and children, old and young, large and small, peering in at us through the cracks, or rather bars, of the hut, for it was unplastered and resembled more a cage than a house. I realized then how menagerie monkeys must feel, if they feel or think at all, when on exhibition before gaping crowds.

Presently supper was served, consisting of three varieties of fish, the local names of which are *robolo*, *liza mocho*, and *constantino*. The fish was exceedingly

well cooked, and accompanied by tortillas and coffee. We used our fingers in lieu of knives and forks, appendages of civilization which have not yet been introduced into this quiet corner of the world. Fish is naturally the food staple here, and, indeed, but few of the people eat meat at all, many of them never having learned its taste, excepting perhaps pork and the flesh of water fowl. The latter are usually so plentiful and tame they can be had for the taking.

We dallied over our meal, and when at length we arose to go, the crowd of spectators had dwindled away to a few stragglers. This was a great relief, for modest men such as those in our party could not but feel embarrassed with so much popularity thus unexpectedly thrust upon them, and without attendance we quietly stole back to Señor Martin's.

Here we were introduced to his bosom friend, the Jefe, or Mayor, who also, I believe, in this instance, acted as Prefecto. The Jefe, like Señor Martin, was a native of Tepic, and, like him, of Indian descent. He is the ruler of Mexcaltatan, while Señor Martin, his adjoining neighbor, is the proprietor of a general store and gambling resort. Thus the two are the great men of the place.

Presently the town band began to play in the plaza, opposite, and the two gentlemen informed us they had employed it to serenade during the evening, in honor of our visit, which was a great event in the history of Mexcaltatan. Only twice before, we were told, within a period of which the memory of man runneth not to the contrary, had white men trod her streets.

The later of these visits had been ten years before

when a renegade American came to kill the beautiful birds of plumage, principally the white heron, which were then very numerous here and so tame they could be knocked over with sticks. The plumage of the heron is at its prime during the hatching season and this was the time chosen to kill them, therefore the young perished with the mother. The fellow slaughtered them by thousands, and when at length, Christian patience exhausted, the Jefe rose up in his wrath against the wanton destruction, and stopped it, and banished the man with a stern warning never to return, this particular species of bird had been so nearly exterminated that it is now rarely seen. It was the business of this criminal to kill birds for aigrettes to adorn our ladies' heads, and it is a question in my mind which is the greater criminal, the man who kills the bird for profit, or the lady who wears the aigrette to satisfy her vanity. I call them criminals, because the offence should be made penal, if it is not. Besides, the word helps to give vent to my strong feeling in the matter. When I see a woman wearing the stuffed carcasses of birds on her head, or the plumage of birds that have been killed solely to supply so-called adornment, I involuntarily liken her to the savage who bedecks himself in like manner. It is the same vanity, the same unrefined, primitive notion of what constitutes adornment, that prompts both to adopt it.

Recently a woman was arguing with me long and ardently against vivisection, and all the while she talked I watched the poor stuffed remains of a bird bobbing on her hat as she nodded her head to punctuate her remarks, and I could not help asking myself, "Is it a sincere sympathy for what she terms 'the

poor, defenceless, tortured creatures' that prompts this woman to take the stand she does against vivisection, or is it simply a fad with her, which she has adopted because she thinks it is 'the thing'?" The hat, with its stuffed bird, was a strong argument against her sincerity, and not consistent with her remarks, and I finally decided in favor of the fad, though I discreetly kept this opinion to myself. I am a timid man. The wrath of a woman is usually unreasoning, often unjustified, and always terrible to contemplate, especially when a man controverts her arguments with a patent proof of her insincerity.

It was too dark to see the town that night, so we sat out of doors, and smoked to keep away the swarms of mosquitoes that infested the place, while we listened to the music and chatted with our jovial host and his friend the Jefe. Though neither of them could speak English, we had little difficulty in carrying on a conversation through Kaiser.

"Did you make your wills before you came?" asked Señor Martin.

"No, why should we make our wills before coming to Mexcaltatan?"

"In the high country they consider it a dangerous undertaking to come down here to the swamps," he explained. "Once in a while a merchant from Tepic or Guadalajara comes, and before he leaves home he always makes his will and says a last farewell to his family."

"Did any of them ever die here?" we asked, with some anxiety lest we had committed a grave oversight in neglecting to make our wills and to bid a fond farewell to Gates and Bigelow.

"Oh, no, it's just an old fiction. After the Conquest the Spaniards ranging the western coast of Mexico discovered the town, and some of them tried to live here, but the miasmal swamps made them all sick with the fever, and they had to move away, and the place has ever since been looked upon as fatal to the white man. A bad name once given a locality will cling to it, deserved or not. It is not really so bad now. The natives will show you piles of oyster shells that they say their forefathers were forced to open to feed the Spaniards in those days. After that the Spaniards came only now and then, when they were on the coast and wanted a load of dried fish. There was nothing to keep them, for there was no gold here — nothing but fish."

"What is the population of Mexcaltatan?" I asked.

"Upwards of a thousand," answered the Jefe.

"Have you ever found any relics that would point to its ancient origin?"

"Oh, yes," said Señor Martin. "Every fourteen years or so the town had been burned down, and three years ago, when we had the last fire, it was decided to build a brick house for the Jefe's office and residence, and the jail, and when excavations were made for foundations a number of idols of stone and clay, arrow heads and stone axes and old pottery were dug up."

"What did you do with them?"

"Gave them to the children to play with. They were of no use."

The following day I endeavored to find some of these relics, hoping they might throw light upon the people who founded Mexcaltatan, but without avail. They had all been lost.

At ten o'clock the band ceased playing, and we were invited to our room in Señor Martin's house.

"A light will draw the mosquitoes," said our host, "so we shall have no light, but pass through the door quickly and retire in the dark."

When the door was opened, in we rushed into unknown blackness, and, for aught we knew, to fall into some bottomless pit. But we found solid ground under our feet, and after groping around for some time and colliding with one another, each finally found himself a canvas cot, and went to his rest.

In the morning an old señora set out a wash basin and some water under the cocoanut trees of the patio, and we bathed our hands and faces, drying them upon our handkerchiefs, for we had forgotten to bring towels with us and our host had none to offer.

Then Señor Martin cut some cocoanuts from the trees, and gave us the milk to drink and afterwards we went out for a fish breakfast with our iron-gray señora. Her hut was the hotel of the town, and one of her guests was at table when we entered. He proved to be a school-teacher, and, like the other gentlemen mentioned, hailed from Tepic. He arose as we entered, and extending his hand to each, greeted us in English with,

"Good-morn-ing. I-am-your-friend," and as we sat down he continued, "I-am-vera-much hun-ger-ie. I-am-the-school-master."

It was gratifying to find some one who could speak English, and I was exceedingly pleased to meet him. A school-master, he was doubtless a man of some education, and his knowledge of English would enable us to converse with him in our own language, and thus

learn much of our surroundings that we should otherwise miss.

"How large a school have you, señor?" I asked, by way of opening the conversation.

"I-count-it-forty-one," he answered with great precision.

"A very good school," I commented. "Have you been teaching here long?"

"I-count-it-forty-one."

I looked at him with astonishment. He was not a day over twenty-eight.

"Excuse me, how long did you say?"

"I-count-it-forty-one." Then in a moment he continued, "I-eata-the-meat. I-have-a-sickness."

We then noticed that instead of fish, he had a small piece of meat before him, fried and burned very black.

"Is that better for your ailment than fish?" I inquired, beginning to wonder whether he was afflicted with leprosy, not uncommon in some localities of Western Mexico, and feeling a decided interest in the matter, for we had all shaken his hand. But his reply was apparently far from the point.

"I-have-a-sweet-heart-with-the-beau-ti-ful-eyes."

"Ah," I remarked, "that must be very pleasant."

"I-likes-it-here."

This was the limit of the school-master's English, except "Good-bye. I-am-your-friend," which was repeated to each of us individually as we departed.

The plaza of Mexcaltatan is a rectangle, in dimension about sixty by one hundred feet. Upon one side of it is the Jefe's house — which is also the Government office — before referred to, and this and a small church standing opposite are the only substantial

buildings in the town. Debris, accumulated through centuries, has made solid ground of the plaza, and has filled the ends of the canals adjoining it, to a point above the high-water mark at flood tide during the dry season. But from July to September, when the rivers pour down their torrents from the mountains of the interior into the lagunas, all but the bandstand in the centre of the plaza is submerged, and when the band discourses music from its elevated position on Thursday and Sunday evenings during this period, canoes circle around and in and out amongst the cocoanut trees of the plaza, for then there is not a square foot of earth above the flood to stand upon.

This was the dry season, and nearly a third of the inner end of the canals was drained. Below that, canoes propelled by men or women with long poles moved up and down or swung around the town in the canals that circle in from the outer lagunas. Some of the canoes were laden with fish or shrimps, — the morning catch; others were passing out, to carry the occupants to their morning tasks. There were places in the canals where fish were so numerous that they crowded one another. Once we stopped where a man was sorting shrimps, to watch a school of catfish swarming close to the canoe in which the man worked, and devouring the rejected shrimps as he threw them into the water.

Narrow paths were built along the canals, in front of the houses, and narrow foot bridges, raised high, that they might not interfere with the free passage of canoes, permitted one to cross from canal to canal at the points of intersection. We made a circuit of the town along these paths and over these foot bridges,

and everywhere were announced by children, who shouted into the huts as we approached, "Here they come! Here they come!" and curious-minded folk stood in the doors to gaze at us as we passed.

After our inspection we returned to the plaza. Here Señor Martin and the Jefe were waiting for us to accompany them upon an excursion amongst the lagunas. We were soon away, the five of us and two Indian canoemen in a large dugout, shooting here and there through the beautiful embowered waterways, now into narrow places where the mangroves nearly closed overhead, now into crystal lakes — a veritable fairy maze — until we were quite confused with it all.

It was near eleven o'clock when we returned, and were landed at a great drying wharf, to be introduced to a Chinese merchant, who conducted the great industry of the town in dried fish and shrimps. Ten years before, this Chinaman came from San Francisco's Chinatown and landed at Mexcaltatan with a total capital of fifty pesos and an accumulated stock of absorbed Western American push. Now he is doing a yearly business of \$150,000 in dried fish, which he exports to his fellow countrymen in San Francisco, and dried shrimps which he distributes among the interior cities of Mexico. He owns a large fleet of dugout canoes, manned by Indians, some engaged in fishing, others, the *carreteros* (freighters), in carrying the prepared product to the mainland mule trains, or to the steamers at San Blas or Mazatlan. One can pass through inland lagunas almost the entire distance from San Blas, at the south of Mexcaltatan, to Mazatlan to the north of it, a distance by canoe of about one hundred and fifty miles or thereabouts, and this route

has offered the Chinaman a cheap method of transportation for his products intended for the north-bound steamers. To be exact, his business the year before our visit amounted to \$50,000 in fish, \$100,000 in shrimps, and \$3,000 in salt — Mexican money. In ten years he has accumulated in these lines of industry a working capital of \$300,000. He deplored the fact that he could not get a concession to carry on the deep-water shark fishing of the coast, for shark fins sell readily in San Francisco's Chinese colony; but another Chinaman has that concession.

From the Chinaman's drying yards, we visited a school. The master — not our friend — seemed much pleased at the opportunity to have his schoolroom and his flock photographed. His "flock" at the time consisted of but three children — all boys. However, he politely excused himself until he could gather in some more youngsters, for he wished to make a good showing. We waited for him, and in a little while he returned with four or five recruits, whom he had gathered from adjoining houses, and the photograph was duly made. The schoolhouse was much superior to the average dwelling. It served also as the sleeping-room of the master, as a canvas cot in the rear, enclosed within a mosquito bar, gave evidence.

Opening upon the patio behind the Jefe's quarters was a jail in which three Indian prisoners were confined — two men and a woman. Some weeks previously the prisoners, with another woman, left San Blas one day in a dugout canoe, *en route* to Mazatlan. They were overtaken by a storm, the canoe capsized, and one of the women perished. The three prisoners reached an island in safety, but every rag of clothing

had been torn from their backs by the buffeting of the sea, and all their food and everything they owned in the world was lost beneath the waves. The sea drove the body of the drowned woman upon the shore, and the survivors, with sticks and hands, dug a grave in the sand and buried it to protect it from the thousands of vultures hovering above in anticipation of a ghoulish feast.

I shall not attempt to tell the story of how the three, with nothing but bare hands, found means to eke out an existence upon fish which were caught by the most primitive methods, and upon roots which they dug, until finally they were discovered and rescued by a passing canoe, and brought to Mexcaltatan. Here their nakedness was covered, and then they were thrown into prison for committing the heinous offence of burying a human body before the proper authorities had viewed it, for under the laws of Mexico this is a grave crime. The law does not take into consideration the fact that the flesh of bodies left unburied will be devoured by the ever-waiting vultures in a few brief hours, for vultures leave nothing but bones behind them. Six months in prison was the sentence. The unfortunate ones each had a small cell, with earthen floor, but no blanket, bedding, or furniture. The cells had no windows, but an iron-barred door admitted light and air. A chain, passed around one of the bars and around a log laid across the doorway outside, the links of the chain fastened with an antiquated padlock, held the occupants insecurely. I could not help remarking that if the prisoners had been very ambitious to escape they could have done so with slight effort. The chief of police — and he

constituted the entire police force of the town — graciously permitted the gift of a few coins to the prisoners.

Referring again to the vultures, I may say that they were particularly numerous and tame at Mexcaltatan. They sat upon the roofs, were at home in the plaza, and everywhere watched for fish scraps like a lot of hungry chickens. Upon ascending the narrow steps in the bandstand I had to push one of them out of my way. Without these scavengers Mexcaltatan would not be habitable, for fish refuse would make a pest hole of it.

There were two or three cows wading in the shallow water, and swimming across the deeper channels to browse upon the verdure of an adjacent island. Señor Martin told us they ate fish, and moreover, he assured us, they were adept at catching them. Perhaps they did, but it stretched one's credulity to believe it, and I did not see them do it. There were, however, hogs wallowing in the mud, and chickens everywhere, which lived almost wholly upon fish.

Our horses were to be in waiting on the mainland at three o'clock, and after a dinner consisting of the famous Aztec dish *tatishuile*, composed wholly of shrimps, and an especially toothsome fish known locally as *Majarras*, we bade good-bye to Señor Martin and the Jefe.

And so we left behind us this wonderful bit of old Mexico, this town of the Aztecs with its quaint people and quaint life, its ancient canals and embowered lagunas, its flowers and its birds, well satisfied with our visit, and withal quite ready to move on to other scenes.

Miguel was waiting for us with our mounts when we reached the mainland at half-past three, and an hour after dark, when everything under foot was dripping wet with heavy evening dew, and overhead the cloudless azure was aglitter with stars, we rode into the patio of the Hotel Sur Pacifico in Santiago Ixcuintla. Frederico Kaiser had severed his connection with the San Nicolás Hacienda, and the following morning when Emerson, Randall, and I took the river trail for the ranch, we bade him a final good-bye.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PARTING IN MAZATLAN HARBOR

DURING our stay in Tepic Territory, nearly every day was spent in the saddle exploring the surrounding country, getting a close view of the people and the life, or hunting. Game was plentiful, and the birds and venison on our table were secured without much effort, — but no one ever killed beyond the requirements of the larder. Several varieties of quail abound here, but the California quail is, perhaps, the most numerous. Pheasants are in the hills, and you have only to wait by a brook to get your deer. We all had a crack at the alligators, of course, which could be seen at any time sunning themselves on the sands at the river bank; and it was no great feat to shoot them.

One day a telegram came from Ramos announcing a north-bound Pacific Mail steamer due to arrive at San Blas on November seventeenth. Emerson was to go home on this steamer, and to my great regret Randall also found it necessary, for business reasons, to return. The steamer was to touch at Mazatlan, and that I might enjoy the society of my friends as long as possible, I decided to accompany them as far as that port, rather than go by the stage, which had no attraction for me. From Mazatlan I could proceed by stage, or any more agreeable means that might offer, to Culiacan, the capital city of the State of

Sinaloa, there to outfit for my further inland travels. It had been the intention of Randall and myself to purchase mules in Santiago Ixcuintla, and to journey northward to Mazatlan and Culiacan over the trails, but good mules at that season were difficult to get, and at a premium, and we had been forced to relinquish our plan.

So on the fourteenth of November we said farewell to Bigelow and rode away. Gates and Serapio accompanied us as far as the Caimonaro, and I rode behind with Serapio, to chat with him about the country, while the others trotted ahead.

"I no likes you go," said Serapio as we jogged along. "You come-a once again?"

"I don't know, Serapio," I answered. "I should like to come sometime, but it is uncertain."

"Yes, come-a the June month. Write-a the letter before. I senda th' mozo Santiago with th' horse. I take-a you tiger hunt. I take-a you th' alligator hunt. I take-a you see strange Indian. Three kinda th' Indian, three kinda talk, three kinda clothes. Indian live close each other but no like-a the other."

At this moment our pack mule, which had lagged behind the others and was directly in front of us, decided that it was a propitious time to run away, and off it started through a corn-field that we were passing, scattering our baggage as it fled. Serapio was after it in an instant, at full gallop, swinging his lariat above his head. The rawhide settled around the mule's neck, and the refractory animal was ignominiously led back to recover its load. Then, as though nothing had happened to interrupt our conversation, Serapio continued,

"I take-a you see all. Write-a th' letter for th' June month."

"Thank you, Serapio," I said, grateful for the invitation. "I'll try hard to come, but I can't say yet. I'll let you know."

"I like-a th' Americano. I much Americano, too. I been-a th' cowboy in Texas. Maybe senda my son Miguel. Make-a th' man of Miguel. Make-a th' man of Mexicano. Americano in-a th' business, quick. Mexicano, no. Ask-a Americano business, he say 'yes,' 'no,' quick. Ask-a Mexicano, he say '*mañana*.' 'You come-a to-morrow'; again he say '*mañana*', always '*mañana*.' Keep you one week, maybe two, always '*mañana*', then tella you 'no good.' Damn! Damn-a bad lot! Sell-a th' goods same-a th' Jew. Has-a th' many price. One-a price to you, different price to other. Mexicano pay one price, Americano pay two-a, three-a times more. *Damn!*'"

In Mexico, as Serapio said, everything is to be done *mañana*, and if you ask a Mexican a question that calls for any other answer than "yes" or "no," his reply is sure to be "*Quien sabe?*" (Who knows?)

This suggests a story I heard in Mexico. An American was standing on a street corner one day watching a funeral procession file past. It was an elaborate funeral with many mourners, and suggested that the deceased had been some one of distinction. To satisfy his curiosity the American asked a Mexican at his side,

"Who was the deceased, my friend?"

"*Quien sabe?*" came the inevitable answer, with the annoying shrug of the shoulders that always accompanies it.

"Well," said the American, his face lighting up, "I'm glad '*Quien Sabe*' is dead. I suppose I'm hard-hearted, but *I'm glad*. Now, if '*Mañana*' would only die, there'd be some hope for your country."

At the Caimonaro, Gates and Serapio left us, and after dark that night we rode into Navarrete. I had not forgotten the promise made to the round-faced señorita, when I took the snapshot of her on our previous visit, and before we sat down to supper I gave her a copy of the photograph. She accepted it eagerly, and for a full half-hour, while we were eating, admired it, now and then uttering a delighted exclamation. After supper, I took a seat on a bench, and she came over and sat by me, still holding the photograph. She looked at me intently for a moment and then placing her hand upon my shoulder exclaimed, "Don Pancho! O, Don Pancho!" She had decided that I was a magician or possessed some superhuman power, that I could produce her likeness upon paper in that manner. She asked where I was going, and I told her, through Randall, who had mastered some of the dialect, to Culiacan, and then far, far away. She wanted to go with me. A man who could do what I had done could do anything. She would stay with me always. The situation was becoming interesting for me, and very amusing to the others. I had not foreseen any such result as this when I made that miserable print. I told her it was a cold, cold country I lived in, and she would not like it, — I could not take her with me.

Presently our mozo came in and asked, "*A qui salga?*" (At what time do you go?)

"What bobtailed Spanish!" exclaimed Randall,

after he had instructed the mozo to be ready at six on the morning.

It was near noon the following day when we had our first glimpse of San Blas Hill, and for my two friends, now homeward bound, it was good to see. Ramos met us at the Hotel Americano, with the disturbing report that the bubonic plague had broken out in Mazatlan, but cheered us with the information that the previous report of cholera was unfounded. I immediately wired the American consul in that town, Mr. Louis Kaiser, requesting the facts, and the next day received the following reply:

"No bubonic or other plagues here except scarcity of money."

I was already inoculated with the germs of that plague, so the telegram brought me great relief.

San Blas, which had seemed to us so strange and wonderful, so Oriental and unique, but a few weeks before, was now exceedingly commonplace. Close contact with the country had robbed it of its first charm, and eager as we had been then to dip into the novel life, we were now still more eager to be away. Possibly the *hehens*, or sand flies, had something to do with our wish. They were exceedingly numerous and active, and attacked us most effectively.

The steamer was a day behind the expected time and Ramos took us fishing out to "Old Blanco," a bird rock lying off the shallow harbor. I had just hauled in a fish that resembled some descriptions of Mephistopheles, and Emerson in an inexplicable manner had taken a half-hitch around a snake, which he also brought aboard our boat, when he and Randall developed seasickness and nausea, and we had to quit.

But we bought some oysters — not comparable in quality with our Atlantic oysters — which we took to the hotel, and Ramos secured some milk and made a good old-fashioned stew, the first thing that tasted like American food since our landing in Mexico. It was a source of amusement to the old women who ran our hotel, and they laughed at Ramos while he cooked it over the kitchen fire, which piqued him to such an extent that he refused to let them taste it.

Our party was enlarged here by a young mining chemist — a typical American optimist — who came in during the night. The mine he was employed in was controlled by an American bank which had gone down in the financial crash. He and two friends were left stranded. They pawned their instruments in Tepic City, and he was on his way home to raise money to pay the passage of his friends to San Francisco. He had just funds enough in his pocket to buy a steerage ticket. It was his second or third experience of this kind in Mexico, but he was very philosophical and treated it as a huge joke.

On November eighteenth the *City of Para* anchored off San Blas, and we lost no time in going aboard. Ramos put two lighter loads of bananas into her hold, then said farewell, and, just as the sun was dropping into the Pacific, we steamed away. Randall stood at the rail as San Blas faded from view, and I heard him say:

“Good-bye, thou land of sunshine and perspiration, fleas and *hehens*, *garapotas* and *alacranes*, *mañana* and *quien sabe*. I’m going home to God’s country. I’m a good citizen of the United States, and I never was so proud of it as now.” Turning to the Stars and

Stripes floating aft, he took off his hat. "Flag, I salute thee! That old flag does look mighty good, does n't it?" And then we went into the dining saloon to enjoy the first good American dinner, and the first food not seasoned with chilli peppers, we had eaten for weeks, and not an item on the menu escaped us.

The *City of Para* dropped anchor in the offing at Mazatlan on the morning of November nineteenth. Half a mile away, under Cerro del Creston, lay another American steamer with the yellow flag of quarantine flying from her foremast, an indication that she had recently arrived, and, probably, from San Francisco, as that was practically the only port against which quarantine regulations were strictly enforced by the Mazatlan authorities. Upon inquiry it was learned that this steamer was the *Curacao* of the Pacific Coast Line, and was doubtless northward bound to Gulf of California ports. If this were the case it would suit me exactly. I could take passage on her to Altata, the seaport of Culiacan, and go thence by rail to Culiacan, as the capital city, forty-five miles inland, is connected with Altata by a railway. Thus I could avoid an excruciating stage journey from Mazatlan, and economize time.

The same doctor who had rejected us before now pronounced us worthy of admission to Mazatlan society, for our brief residence in Mexico had purged us of such germs as we might have brought down with us from our own pest-ridden country; and with this permission to land, we engaged one of the numerous boatmen, who were clamoring for passengers at the ship's side, to take us ashore.

Once on land we hurried to the office of the Pacific Coast Line, where I found my surmise as to the *Curacao's* course to be correct, and that she would sail that very evening for Altata. My passage ticket was quickly purchased, some other business transacted, and then we called upon Mr. Louis Kaiser, the American consul, to pay our respects.

We found Mr. Kaiser* to be a jolly, cordial little man, in dimensions about five feet tall and four feet broad. He had occupied this post for several years, and was one of the most efficient, active, and popular of our consular agents in Mexico. He evinced interest in my trip, and offered me every possible assistance in collecting data, an offer which I was profoundly grateful for, and of which I took advantage later.

We ate dinner at the Hotel Central, Emerson, Randall, and I, and a very good dinner it was. We made much of it, too, for this was to be our farewell meal together, and we realized how unlikely it was that the three of us would ever sit at the same table together again. We talked over the experiences of past weeks with their delightful companionship, and made plans and promises for future correspondence, until the hour appointed to meet our boatmen. Then we reluctantly returned to the wharf, loaded my baggage, which had been left at the custom house, into the boat, and rowed to the *Curacao's* side. My friends were not permitted to come aboard, because of the yellow flag at the masthead; so we said farewell at the ladder, and they proceeded to their ship.

The Pacific was aglow with the afterlight of a mag-

* Mr. Kaiser has since resigned.

nificent sunset as we steamed past the *City of Para*. I sat upon the deck until she was swallowed up by the night, and until the dark silhouette of Cerro del Creston, surmounted by its lofty blinking light, was lost in the distance.

CHAPTER XVIII

NORTH OF THE TROPICS

THE *Curacao* steamed into Altata harbor at nine o'clock on the morning of November twentieth. In the night we had crossed the Tropic of Cancer, and passed out of the torrid into the temperate zone. In even this short journey to the northward there was a marked difference in the temperature, and in a few hours the burning heat of the south had been supplanted by a balmier and less stifling atmosphere.

The white huts of Altata, with their thatched roofs of sea grass clustering on the sandy beach or rising on the face of a low sand hill, with little vegetation to be seen, save here and there a stately cocoanut palm, presented a picturesque, though squalid, appearance. The lack of green shrubbery and grass could not fail to strike one forcibly, and nowhere was there a church spire or a substantial structure to give dignity to the place. The unsubstantial character of the buildings, I learned, was due to the fact that some ten or twelve years before a tidal wave had submerged and destroyed the greater part of the town. The business portion of Altata previous to that time had contained several buildings of brick and stone, but they had crumbled away before the flood, and now vessels anchor where they once stood. When Altata was rebuilt only these flimsy huts were erected to

take the place of those destroyed, "for," argued the philosophical natives, "some time or other a tidal wave may come again, and so what is the use of building good houses?"

The sand slopes out so gently toward the deep water of the harbor roadway that the boat in which I left the ship, in company with several other passengers, was brought to a stop by the shallow water some ten or fifteen yards from shore; and here our two bare-legged boatmen sprang into the surf, and carried us to dry land upon their backs.

Though I had just come from a Mexican port, a fact of which the officers were well assured by ample proof, I was called upon to unpack my bags and display to the gaze of the inspector and the assembled populace every last article I had with me. One of the onlookers was a fat Mexican of Spanish extraction, who could speak very good English. He politely offered to interpret for me, and through him I explained to the customs officers who and what I was, where I bought this and that, how much I paid for it, the color, sex, age, and nationality of the salesman or saleswoman from whom I purchased it, where I had been and what I had done during the past decade, my prospects in life, my antecedents, in short, my pedigree generally. I laid bare to them my innermost soul. A friend told me later that I was subjected to this third degree ordeal because I looked like an escaped bank embezzler from the United States, and just then, in the midst of the financial difficulty in the States, there were a good many of these gentlemen floating down into Mexico.

In this connection I may say that it is not good

form to ask an American in Mexico his name, and it is positively rude to ask him what part of the United States he came from, for in doing so one is likely to tread upon delicate ground. I know one American down there who, when introduced to a fellow countryman, always asks: "What was your name before you came to Mexico?" This man is not in favor, and he is ostracized by the wealthier members of the American colony — those whose feelings are injured by the insinuation.

During the inquisition that the customs official put me through I kept my temper. As a reward no backsheesh in the form of duty was levied upon me. I learned later that the fat Mexican was the leader of a sort of Tammany Hall political organization and, therefore, in him was combined the mayor, the officials that take the place of aldermen, and so on — a sort of Pooh-Bah concentrated essence of government, although not nominally an office-holder at all; in short, just like the leader of Tammany Hall in New York City. Perhaps that was why he was so portly and prosperous.

Altata, as was stated in a previous chapter, is the seaport of Culiacan, the capital of the State of Sinaloa. These towns, situated forty-five miles distant from each other, are the terminals of the railroad that connects them. Since it was put in operation in the early seventies practically no improvement or addition has been made to the road or its rolling stock, and the same wood-burning locomotives, with the same wide-mouthed smoke-stacks, are still in service. There are only two locomotives on the line and they have undergone no change since they came from the



Going ashore at Altata



A scene in Altata

shops of the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Paterson, New Jersey, nearly forty years ago. There are first- and second-class passenger cars on this road — no stretch of the imagination could dignify them as coaches — and tri-weekly trains are operated. The first-class cars are nothing more or less than old-fashioned box cars with doors and platforms built in the ends, windows in the sides, and with rough slat seats. The second-class cars are flat cars with similar seats and a roof, but no sides. Formerly they had third-class cars. What these could have been like it is hard to imagine, unless they were plain flat cars with no seats or roof.

Fortunately I had arrived on a day when a train was scheduled to leave Altata. I say "scheduled to leave," for one can never tell whether it will actually leave or not, and if it does, how far it will go, — it is so prone to get off the rails. It was near twelve o'clock when they finished with me at the custom house, and then I had a mozo transfer my baggage to the station at once, where I learned that the train would depart for Culiacan at two.

At the station I met a young American, one of the *Curacao's* passengers, who had come ashore to stretch his legs and look around. I had nearly two hours at my disposal, and we decided to utilize the time in a joint survey of Altata, and in quest of dinner.

Our curiosity as to the town was soon satisfied, for we found it to be a most miserable and unattractive place. In the streets one sinks ankle-deep in sand, the plaza is a square of sand void of all verdure, and the interiors of the houses are squalid and dirty. We were directed for dinner to one of the larger hovels

down by the beach, which we were informed was the principal hotel. When I saw the place I was most thankful that it was not my lot to pass a night in it. Several weeks later I had occasion to recall this, when my fortune changed.

Shortly after two o'clock the train pulled out, to bump leisurely along the streaks of rust that took the place of rails, and presently the conductor, an American, a unique individual named Charley, appeared to collect the tickets. The most noticeable characteristics of Charley were a broad-brimmed sombrero, attached to his coat by a string, and an impassive face, punctuated by a sharp nose surmounted by two small eyes. He was accompanied by a Mexican, who received money, and supplied tickets to those who had not purchased them at the station. Charley had this Mexican ticket seller with him as a precautionary measure, and as a matter of self-protection. In the early days of the railroad he did the work alone, but one day a passenger who had no ticket declined to pay his fare, for the very good reason that he had no fare to pay. Charley pitched the man off the train without going to the formality of stopping it, and the passenger was so careless and inconsiderate as to get killed, which was quite uncalled for so far as the speed of the train was concerned. It annoyed Charley a good deal, for he had to stop the train to pick up the remains and take them to the next house. It annoyed him still more when the authorities put him into jail for a few days while the occurrence was investigated. Of course, Charley was set free, for he had done nothing but pitch the fellow off the moving train, and it was not his fault if the man did not

alight properly and was killed. After this occurrence the native ticket seller was installed as a sort of official bouncer. Charley, I might say, is many other things on this railroad beside conductor. He is general traffic manager, roadmaster, trainmaster, superintendent of motive power, and holds other offices too numerous to mention — a sort of railroad official trust.

The railroad bridge across the Culiacan River, a stream of considerable breadth, washes away each year in the annual flood, and this year it had not yet been replaced. The passengers were all ferried across in canoes, and on the opposite side we found the other engine and other cars waiting us, and after a half-hour's delay, to permit of the transfer of freight, were on our way again.

There were two Americans on the train *en route* to Culiacan. We three spent the time very pleasantly chatting about the country and its possibilities, and noting the condition of the crops. For a few miles from the coast the soil is sandy and barren, and then the train passes into a fertile district. This section has a striking likeness to Southern California. The soil and topography of the country resemble it very closely, though the vegetation is naturally more tropical.

There is marked contrast between the natives here and those of Tepic Territory. These have a less swarthy skin, and their features and movements stamp them as of different blood. This is doubtless to some extent due to the fact that here there is a greater mixture of blood and races, brought about by the readier means of communication with those farther

north, supplied by frequent steamers and numerous sailing craft on the coast, and extended inland from Altata by the railroad to Culiacan. The men do not wear pajamas, but otherwise the dress is similar to that seen in Tepic.

Our train halted for some time opposite the refining works of the Sinaloa Sugar Company, owned by an American firm. It is one of the most extensive sugar plants in Mexico, and one of very few where modern, up-to-date machinery has been installed. The annual production of the factory is over two thousand tons. As a general rule, the sugar mills of Mexico are fitted with antiquated machinery, and antediluvian methods of manufacture are in vogue. On either side of the railroad, for a considerable distance around the sugar works, lay magnificent fields of cane, which here is unusually rich in quality and large in size.

Darkness finally came to shut out our view of the country. A native brakeman hung a smoky lantern in the car, which cast gloom rather than light, and I was glad when the glare of the electric lights of Culiacan at length sprang into view on our left, as the train lumbered around a curve.

It was seven o'clock when we came to a halt at the station. Instantly a dozen men and boys rushed into the car, in mad competition to secure possession of the passengers' hand baggage, with the avowed intention of carrying it, for a consideration, to waiting carriages outside. I had been warned that sometimes these fellows after securing baggage mysteriously disappeared with it in the crowd and darkness, to be seen no more, and I resolved to hold on to mine. After two or three strenuous wrestling matches with

insistent ones, I at length found myself on the platform, still in control of my suit case, only to be beset by a crowd of carriage drivers intent upon capturing me bodily. I finally selected one who looked honest and had a fairly good-appearing rig. He climbed to his seat, another handed my suit case up to him, and with the direction "Hotel Cosmopolita" we rattled away toward the centre of the town, finally halting in front of the hotel, which faces the spacious plaza.

It was an attractive-looking hostelry from without and well situated. The room to which I was shown was typical of Mexican hotels. When I came down to supper, I was greeted by the proprietor, who proved to be a German speaking very good English. What was my astonishment at this moment to have a young native appear and demand *dos reales* for handing my suit case to the driver of my carriage at the station. I explained the circumstances to the landlord, who in turn expressed himself to the applicant in what must have been forceful terms, to judge from the fellow's hasty withdrawal. I did not recall having seen the man though I suppose he was the one who had grabbed my suit case from me and had handed it to the driver. My friend, the landlord, remarked with commendable candor that it was because I looked green and inexperienced that the fellow "tried to touch me."

Out on the wide brick sidewalk in front of the hotel several Americans, clad in khaki, flannel shirts, and sombreros, were gathered around a table smoking and chatting, and after supper I lit a cigar and joined them. They were miners and prospectors temporarily in from the mountains. The subject of conversation

was the burial that day in the Culiacan cemetery of an American. They had contributed to give the deceased a decent interment, and were shocked to find that the Mexican gravedigger had shovelled up the bones of other deceased individuals, and fragments of the putrefied remains of a less ancient corpse, for whom friends and relations had doubtless failed to pay ground rent.

That is the way they conduct their cemeteries generally in Mexico. The plots are not sold, but rented, and upon failure to duly and promptly pay rent, the corpse is unceremoniously disinterred, when occasion arises to use the ground for the accommodation of another. Coffins, too, are rented. The body is taken to the grave in one, and there removed, so that the same coffin serves over and over again. The burial of a coffin would be looked upon as a sinful waste.

This sprightly subject of conversation exhausted, my friends discussed mines and mining, and I learned that nearly all the operations had been affected by the financial depression at home, and most of the mines indefinitely closed. This was not very pleasant news. I had planned to visit some of the workings on my way to Tepehuanes, the nearest railway point on the plateau beyond the Sierra Madres, which was my next objective *en route* to Durango, Monterey, and Mexico City.

CHAPTER XIX

A WEDDING AND A BULL-FIGHT

THE town was just awakening when I arose in the morning and stepped out upon the hotel balcony, for a first daylight view of my new surroundings. Early shafts of sunlight were falling upon the tall spires of the beautiful cathedral and shimmering in the treetops of the plaza, the sky was cloudless, and the atmosphere, sweet with the perfume of dew-wet flowers, was balmy and delicious. It was a superb and inspiring morning. For eight months of the year this is the condition in Culiacan. The air is balmy and full of sweetness; it is not so warm as to be uncomfortable, and it is never cold. The sun shines all day long from a soft blue sky, the flowers ever bloom, the grass and trees are ever green.

The weather here is not a topic of conversation. It would be superfluous and tiresome always to say when one meets an acquaintance, "A fine day, sir," or "Beautiful weather we 're having." So that subject, with its trite remarks, is entirely eliminated, and one cannot fall back upon it when conversation lags. Even during the four months or so of the wet, heated term it is the same, for then, too, every one knows at night just what to expect in the morning.

Culiacan lays claim to ancient origin and a romantic past. There is a legend that the Aztecs, in their migration to the southward, were so charmed by the

situation, the climate, and the luxuriant flowers and vegetation, that they halted here, decided to go no farther, and built a town. They tarried in great content until one day the god Quitzalcoatl, who had long been silent, commanded them through an oracle to proceed again upon their journey and not to stop until they came to a lake where they should see an eagle, seated upon a cactus, devouring a snake. There they were to build their city and found their kingdom. And thus it happened that Tenochtitlan, instead of Culiacan, became the seat of the Aztec Empire.

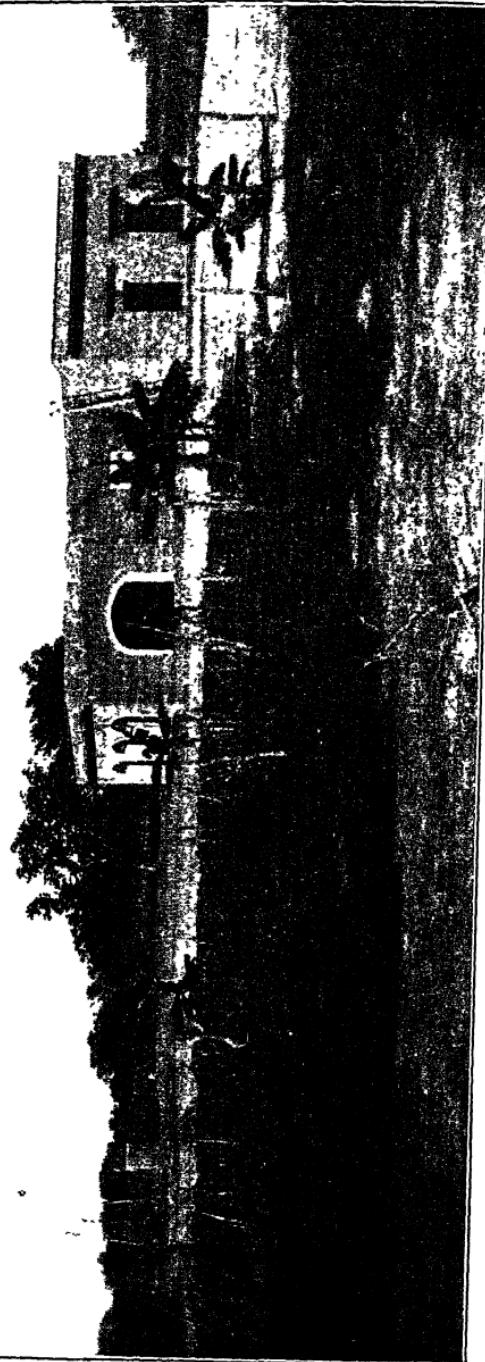
Some of the Aztecs remained behind in Culiacan, and here the Spaniards found a considerable settlement when they explored the country adjacent to the Gulf of California. It was a rare situation, and the conquerors so quickly made of it a military stronghold that only nine years after the Conquest, when two escaped priests, who had been members of an expedition which was massacred by Indians in what is now Arizona, found their way here, the commander of Culiacan fortress was able, on a day's notice, to despatch a thousand troops to avenge the massacre, and incidentally to force the untractable Arizona Indians to become Christians.

It is not to be supposed that this and others of the pretty legends recorded in the course of our narrative are substantiated history, but only that they are about as well authenticated as two-thirds of what we read of the "history" of Mexico previous to the Conquest, and as reliable as most of the surmises of the antiquarians, who consistently disagree with one another. These legends are repeated as I heard them, and the reader may believe them *in toto*, in part, or not at all,



Cave with adobe front, used as a dwelling, near Culiacan

An American ranch-house near Culiacan



according to his credulity. My own credulity is weak. However, the word "Culiacan" is of Indian origin and that is something.

I purchased some delicious fruit from a street vender — whom I later learned was a leper, — and after a walk in the plaza and breakfast at the hotel, called at the office of the Sinaloa Land Company, and presented a letter of introduction from its president in Los Angeles to Mr. J. C. McCarthy, its resident manager. Mr. McCarthy welcomed me most cordially, and not only expressed an interest in my trip but was good enough to offer to assist me in my quest for information about the country. He had spent many years in various parts of Mexico, with unusual opportunities for observation, and I felt myself fortunate indeed in thus securing his kindly coöperation. I accepted an invitation to drive with him in the afternoon, and in his company saw and learned more of the capital city of Sinaloa in two or three hours than I could have observed otherwise in a week.

Culiacan has at present a population of about fourteen thousand. Its railroad connection with the coast makes it so accessible to the Pacific steamers, and therefore to San Francisco by that route, and to the southwestern United States by way of the Gulf of California steamers to Guaymas, and thence by the Sonora Railroad which connects with the Southern Pacific Railroad, that it is quite Americanized and modernized in many respects. It has several good, up-to-date stores where nearly anything one may desire can be found.*

* Since my visit the new railroad has been put into operation to Mazatlan, and one may ride in a Pullman car, without change, from Los Angeles to Culiacan.

Being the seat of the Sinaloa State government, it numbers among its residents some of the best families of the Republic; and in the better society one finds a degree of refinement and culture not usual in Mexican cities of its size. Several of the younger set, particularly, have travelled and been educated in the United States and Europe. Naturally they reflect what they have absorbed abroad, and the effect of it is plainly visible. The leading families are almost wholly of Spanish origin, though some of them have intermarried with Europeans and Americans, and it may be pertinent to remark that young American gentlemen are looked upon by the marriageable ladies with much favor.

These advanced conditions of Culiacan society are due, in no small measure, to the influence of the enlightened and progressive governor, Señor Francisco Cañedo.* He is a stanch supporter of President Diaz, — one of that group of patriots mentioned in an earlier chapter, who are working for the purity of government and morals and for the uplifting of their country. There is, too, a remarkable public spirit manifest in the State legislature. Broad and just laws have been enacted and are intelligently administered, and life and property of foreigners and natives alike are as well protected as in the United States.

One of the things that impressed me in my afternoon drive with Mr. McCarthy was the cleanliness of the streets. In this respect Culiacan is far above the average Mexican city. The laws require that every householder shall each morning sweep clean the sidewalk and street opposite his house, and this require-

* Recently deceased.

ment induces care. It is a conceit of the inhabitants that they have the best kept city in the Republic, and they try to live up to it.

There is a large cotton mill situated here, where coarse cotton fabrics and zeraipes, such as are worn by the peons, are manufactured. We were shown through it, and I could almost have imagined myself in a New England mill. It was running to its full capacity on cotton raised on local haciendas.

Culiacan has two plazas, and music is to be heard nearly every afternoon or evening in one or the other of them. The boys' band from the Industrial Reform School, a Mexican institution unique to Culiacan, was playing in one of them and we halted our carriage to enjoy the very excellent music, which, it might be remarked, did not partake of the mournful character so noticeable in Tepic.

After dinner that evening I took early leave of Mr. McCarthy, that I might attend the cathedral, where the religious half of a marriage ceremony was to be performed in public. The civil half was reserved for the seclusion of the home of the bride's parents, and to this only invited guests were admitted.

The general public and myself were lined up on either side of the cathedral interior, leaving a wide aisle from the broad main entrance doors, in front, to the altar. There we waited patiently for half an hour, until a signal was given for the music to begin, and the wedding party appeared.

The bride was very attractive, as were the eight bridesmaids. I do not remember anything about the gentlemen. I forgot to look at them. The ladies were dressed in some sort of fluffy white stuff, the

bride wearing a veil, and the bridesmaids white lace mantillas. None of them wore gloves, save possibly the bride, and of that I am not certain. To the advantage of the exchequer of the head of the family ladies do not wear gloves and bonnets in Western Mexico.

At the altar the bride's father duly asserted that she was his legitimate daughter, and with solemn service the padre performed the marriage ceremony. Then the band struck up and bride and groom walked out with their guests, to be driven to the home of the bride's father, where a civil officer was waiting to legalize the ceremony. Here, in accordance with custom, all doors were locked, no guest allowed to depart, and the night was given over to dancing, champagne, and hilarity until four o'clock in the morning, when the whole party returned to the cathedral to attend mass.

Every traveller in Mexico desires to see one bull-fight before he leaves the country, and an opportunity to satisfy my curiosity in this respect was offered me soon after my arrival in Culiacan. I was walking with an acquaintance one morning, when a band marched past, playing lively airs, accompanied by several men distributing hand bills. They were announcing a bull-fight to take place that afternoon.

Every American in the place had seen a bull-fight, and I was unable to find any willing to have his sensibilities again shocked by the spectacle; so a little before the hour announced for it to begin, I made my way alone to the grandstand in the arena.

Though it was early when I arrived, the spectators were already rapidly filling the seats. Men, women,

and children, for the most part the peon class, crowded the ordinary seats, while the more prosperous ones occupied the grandstand. I was happy to note that not many among them belonged to the better society of the city, and that State officials were conspicuously absent. This, it seemed to me, was an indication that, though bull-fights were permitted, the better people were not altogether in harmony with them.

The arena was about eighty feet in diameter, encircled by a fence five or six feet in height, behind which, in tiers, were seated the spectators. In front of this fence, at intervals of a few feet, shields were built as a retreat for the fighters when closely pressed by an infuriated bull.

Amid the clamor and shouts of the peons the actors marched in and around the arena before taking their respective places. They were dressed in tight-fitting trousers, short jackets of bright-colored velvet, and velvet capes, elaborately trimmed with gilt lace. Presently a bugle sounded and the capes were thrown to favorites in the audience to hold, as the gate opened to admit the bull.

In a moment the animal appeared and at the instant it passed through the gate two vicious barbed darts, called *banderillas*, surmounted by rosettes and streamers of colored paper, were sunk deep into its shoulders. Thus driven by pain into a spirit of self-defence, the poor beast at first rushed around the ring, and then stopped to shake its head and shoulders in a vain attempt to dislodge the torturing darts. From the wounds blood ran down its quivering sides.

At this moment a mounted *picador* charged with a lance and, as its sharp point stuck into the bull's

shoulder, the animal turned to charge the horse. Usually an old horse is used for this purpose, and the bull is permitted to gore it. Not infrequently the horse is driven about the ring, to the delight of the audience, with its entrails dragging upon the ground. In this instance, however, the horse was a good one, and was well protected by leather. Three times the *picador* charged, and the bleeding, tortured bull returned the assault. Then the *picador* withdrew while a *capeador* flaunted a red cape in front of the bull to distract it.

Now came the placing of more *banderillas*. The *banderillero*, or man who manipulated them, took a position directly in front of the bull, and shook them in its face to attract its attention. The animal charged, and the darts were both stuck deep as the man stepped lightly to one side. There were two of these men, and each placed two pairs of *banderillas* in the bull's shoulders, besides the two original ones, during which time every conceivable means to torment the poor animal were resorted to. Once the bull nearly caught one of the men, and I was, I must confess, almost sorry it did not succeed. The fellow was knocked down and trampled upon, but not badly injured.

Finally the bull, unable to fight further, with blood streaming from its many wounds, stood trembling and exhausted. Then, at a signal, came the *matador* with a long thin sword, which he jabbed several times into the bull, reaching over the horns and sinking it deep, until the poor beast tottered and fell. A team of mules were driven in, a rope attached to the bull's horns, and the animal, still living, was dragged away to the vociferous applause of the people.

Four other bulls were tortured, but only one of

The bull-fight





Indian pottery vendor

them was killed. One poor, frightened animal absolutely refused to get angry, and in disgust they drove it away. I saw one of these animals an hour after it was driven out, standing in a corral with nine of the ugly darts still hanging in its quivering, bleeding body.

During the performance some of the seats opposite me broke down, and several people were badly injured, one woman, I understood, quite seriously. The accident did not delay the bull-fight for an instant. In fact no attention was paid to it, except that those who were not injured made a scramble to secure new points of vantage.

Bull-fighting possesses no element of sport whatever. It is nothing more nor less than an attempt to satisfy the craving of the savage nature of a half-civilized people to witness scenes of torture and bloodshed. It is not far removed from the gladiatorial combats of ancient Rome—a survival of them, in fact—and it should no more have a place in our twentieth-century civilization than they.

I am happy to say that only one American besides myself was present at this bull-fight, and he was a photographer filling a commission. It has been said and written many times that bull-fighting would not long exist in Mexico if it were not for the patronage of Americans. My observation completely refutes the charge. It is not founded upon fact in any instance, but is the statement of maudlin sentimentalists who desire, at the expense of truth and their own countrymen, to throw a halo around a people whom they look upon with romantic veneration, and whom they endow with a refinement, gentleness, and artistic instinct entirely foreign to the subject.

CHAPTER XX

ON THE EDGE OF A BOOM

THE State of Sinaloa stretches along the western coast of Mexico for a distance of nearly four hundred miles. It has an average breadth of eighty miles, which carries its eastern boundary inland amongst the jagged peaks of the Sierra Madres. While the western half of the State is a comparatively level and arable country, the eastern half is rough and broken. Of the large area included within these boundaries, it is safe to say six-tenths is practically an unknown wilderness, traversed only by obscure and difficult trails. And yet, in undeveloped natural wealth, resources both agricultural and mineral, and in its splendid water powers, with the opportunities they offer for manufacturing enterprises, Sinaloa is probably not approached by any other State in Mexico.

Governor Cañedo is fully alive to this fact, and he realizes, too, that the only hope for development lies in the attraction of foreign, and particularly American, capital and enterprise. For some time he has been lending his efforts to this end, with the result that to-day foreign investors are assured full and ample protection, and unusual opportunities are offered them, a condition that has only just begun to be realized and taken advantage of.

The Sinaloa Land Company, heretofore referred to,

is an American corporation with headquarters in Los Angeles, California. A few years ago it accepted a commission from the Sinaloa State Government to survey a portion of the State, and in return received a concession of approximately two million acres of agricultural and timber lands—an area equal to two-thirds of the State of Connecticut. Some of this vast tract is semi-desert, some of it well watered and naturally productive without artificial watering, and some of it rocky and useless mountain land. The company has now under construction extensive irrigation plants, which will eventually make fertile, and easily equal to the irrigated section of Southern California, even the semi-desert lands. Numerous large and never failing rivers assure a certain and inexhaustible supply of water, many times sufficient for the purposes of irrigation.

With its immense land holdings, this company is certain to be an important factor in the development of the State. It is intended that the agricultural lands of the company shall be divided into farms to suit the requirements of settlers, after the plan followed in California, and as soon as proper facilities are established they are to be thrown open to American colonists. When this takes place, these lands are pretty sure to fill up rapidly, and it is hard to prophesy the ultimate results of the movement.

During the time that I made Culiacan my headquarters, I took occasion to observe as much of the present conditions of the neighboring country as possible. One of my excursions was to the rich agricultural country adjacent to Yebbatito las Chivas. This district is representative of a large portion of

lower Sinaloa. Here I rode over a section of one of the cultivated haciendas owned by the Sinaloa Land Company. Corn, beans, barley, alfalfa, and sugar-cane are the chief products of this ranch, and I saw one considerable field of young banana plants recently set out. They raise two, and sometimes three, crops a year without artificial watering, and corn yields under ordinary conditions from four hundred to five hundred fold.

There is a ready market for corn at an average price of seventy-five to eighty cents, gold, per bushel. At the time I was in Culiacan corn was selling at one dollar. As an instance of the rapid maturity of crops here, I might say that on November twenty-fifth I saw a field of corn just appearing above the soil, and on January first, when I visited it again, it was higher than my head, and in tassel.

Beans, too, yield marvellously, and as they are a food staple of Mexico a ready market and a good price is always assured. Sugar-cane averages from thirty to forty tons to the acre, and commands, at the mill, two dollars per ton, giving a net profit, over and above all expenses of labor, cartage, and freight, of about seventy-five cents per ton. This, of course, applies to points not too far removed from the mill. Two or three crops are grown each year.

At present the four principal crops of this locality, speaking generally of the territory adjacent to Culiacan, are corn, beans, sugar-cane, and cotton, though almost any of the tropical and temperate zone crops grow to perfection at the various elevations. The soil and climate are ideal for the culture of oranges, and fruits generally; but until quick railroad com-

munication is established, it will be useless to devote attention to them.

The culture of *henequen* (*agave rigida elongata*), or fibre plant — also known as Sisal hemp — offers great possibilities, though as yet it has received but scant attention in this part of Mexico. *Henequen* is a species of the century plant. It has a short, thick stem, with leaves from six to seven feet in length, three inches wide at the base, widening to five inches at the centre, and two inches thick at the base, with lateral teeth, one or two inches apart, its entire length. *Pulque* and *taquila* are manufactured from broader leafed varieties of the same plant. That utilized for *pulque* is somewhat lighter in shade than the hemp species, and the *taquila* variety a somewhat darker green. The fibre plant grows spontaneously on almost any soil, yields rich returns, and may be counted upon as a safe crop. Approximately eight hundred plants are set out to the acre, and after development, which requires from three to five years, each plant yields annually, during the next ten years, an average of thirty leaves, or twenty-four thousand leaves the acre, producing twenty-four hundred pounds of cleaned fibre. Baled fibre commands in San Francisco market from five and a half to seven and a half cents per pound depending upon quality. It is manufactured into binding twine and cordage in the United States. There are no cordage mills in Mexico, but rope, nets, and brushes are largely made by hand from the *henequen* fibre.

Rough, rocky ground or steep hillsides, where nothing else will grow, may be devoted to fibre culture with good results, though the plant matures somewhat

earlier in the moist climate of the lower levels. While advisable, it is not necessary to plough the ground when the plants are set out, and subsequent working of the soil is unnecessary. There is no fixed time for harvesting the crop, that being determined by signs of maturity. One man with a *machete* can cut eighteen hundred leaves a day. He is followed by a boy, who trims off the thorny teeth, and the spine on the end, after which the leaves are transported on mule-back or in carts to the cleaning machine, known as the *raspador*, where the hemp is extracted from the pulp. One machine, attended by a man and three boys, will clean, on an average, one hundred thousand leaves a day. The fibre, as it comes from the machine, is hung upon galvanized iron wire racks, and, when thoroughly dried, is put into bales of four hundred pounds each, and is then ready for market.

Before the coming of the Spaniards, *henequen* was utilized in Yucatan by the natives, but it is only in comparatively recent years that it has become of great commercial importance. In 1839, an association was formed in Mexico to promote its cultivation, but, with the rough wooden instruments then employed in its manufacture, the venture proved unprofitable. Later, the Government offered a bonus for a practical fibre-extracting machine, and a Franciscan friar invented the *raspador* and won the bonus. With a few slight improvements, this is the machine in use at the present day. It is a simple and inexpensive contrivance.

What California was in forty-nine and the early fifties, Sinaloa is to-day — primitive, new, and but just beginning to be appreciated. The prospector

and miner are on the ground, and the land-looker is appearing.

Culiacan is the outfitting point for the prospectors, and any evening one may see a group of them in khaki and broad-brimmed sombreros, lounging about tables on the sidewalk in front of the *cantina* of the Hotel Cosmopolita, smoking and telling stories and exchanging experiences. These are the trail-blazers of the Mexican Sierras, the advance guard of civilization, the counterpart of those pioneers who drove our frontier beyond the Mississippi and across the Rockies to the Pacific. They are Americans, and most of them veteran gold-hunters of our own Western mountains and deserts — a rough-and-ready, big-hearted, red-blooded lot of fellows, capable, fearless, and energetic. They are laying the cornerstone of this new land.

The vanguard of land investors has already appeared in Sinaloa. I met three or four of them, who were looking over haciendas with a view to purchasing and holding the land for future colonization. But these men work in secret, always fearful that some one will discover their plum tree and pluck the fruit before it is ripe. They try, with indifferent success, to cover their movements and purpose with a shroud of mystery. Even the native hidalgos are beginning to open their eyes to the fact that something is about to happen, and they are becoming suspicious and reluctant to sell their holdings.

Sinaloa is on the edge of a boom, and it is safe to predict for it a great future.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TRAILS AND THE PROSPECTORS

THE nearest railroad point to the eastward of Culiacan is Tepehuanes, a small town on the central Mexican plateau. Between Culiacan and Tepehuanes the Sierra Madres, stretching north and south, form a mighty and almost impassable barrier. The only links connecting the two towns are mule trails of the roughest and most difficult character. These trails mount the Sierras sharply, on the western side rising to an altitude of nearly ten thousand feet before they begin their descent on the opposite slope to the plateau; and a journey over them is attended with enough danger to rob it of monotony, and to add to it the spice of adventure.

This was the route that I was to take to Mexico City. It would give me an opportunity to see the wildest sections of Sinaloa and Durango States, and to come in intimate contact with the mountain Indians, before leaving my mules for the railroad. For this reason I chose it, rather than to take a long detour of several hundred miles to the south by the more conventional stage route to San Marcos, and it was with eager anticipation that I made preparations for the journey late in November.

I had a choice of two trails. One, known as the "river trail," follows the Culiacan River, through its winding canyons, into the heart of the mountains, to

its junction with the Topia River, and thence along the latter river to the mining town of Topia, by more or less easy grades. At Topia it rises suddenly to the heights and takes a southeasterly direction over the ridges to Tepehuanes. This trail is the one generally used by miners and is much the easier one of the two; but as it crosses the river some three hundred and sixty times between Culiacan and Topia, it is only passable during the dry season, when the streams are low enough to ford in safety. Even at this season storms are liable to occur in the high altitudes, and sometimes sudden and unexpected rises of the rivers take place, when they should normally be low, and at such times travellers caught between the high, steep walls of the river canyons find themselves in an unpleasant and often dangerous position.

The other trail is known as the "upper" or "mountain trail," and ascends abruptly from the lower level of Culiacan to the lofty heights of the Sierra Madres, where it traverses broken ridges, skirting the upper walls of canyons, dipping now and again into deep chasms or across canyons, but keeping generally to the heights. This trail is seldom used by any but Indians, for it follows an exceedingly difficult route, and to traverse it is considered no small undertaking.

As it was my desire to see all I could of the interior country, I resolved to travel both the river and the mountain trail. I made my plans accordingly to go to Tepehuanes by the upper trail, and, after my visit to Mexico City, return by the other, thus securing all the experiences the trip could afford.

It was not easy to find a competent guide. Though several mozos knew the river trail to Topia, there were

only two or three available who had ever been so far as Tepehuanes. But one of these had been over the upper trail at all, and he was not acquainted with it for any considerable distance into the mountains. He was the nearest approach to a guide that I could find, however, and finally, upon his assurance that, through inquiry from Indians whom we should certainly meet, he could doubtless find his way, and upon the recommendation of a Culiacan merchant that he was a man upon whom I could depend to look after my interests and not kill and rob me while I slept, I engaged him for the journey. I congratulated myself upon being so fortunate as to secure him, for he had the appearance of a superior man, with an intelligence far above that of the average mozo.

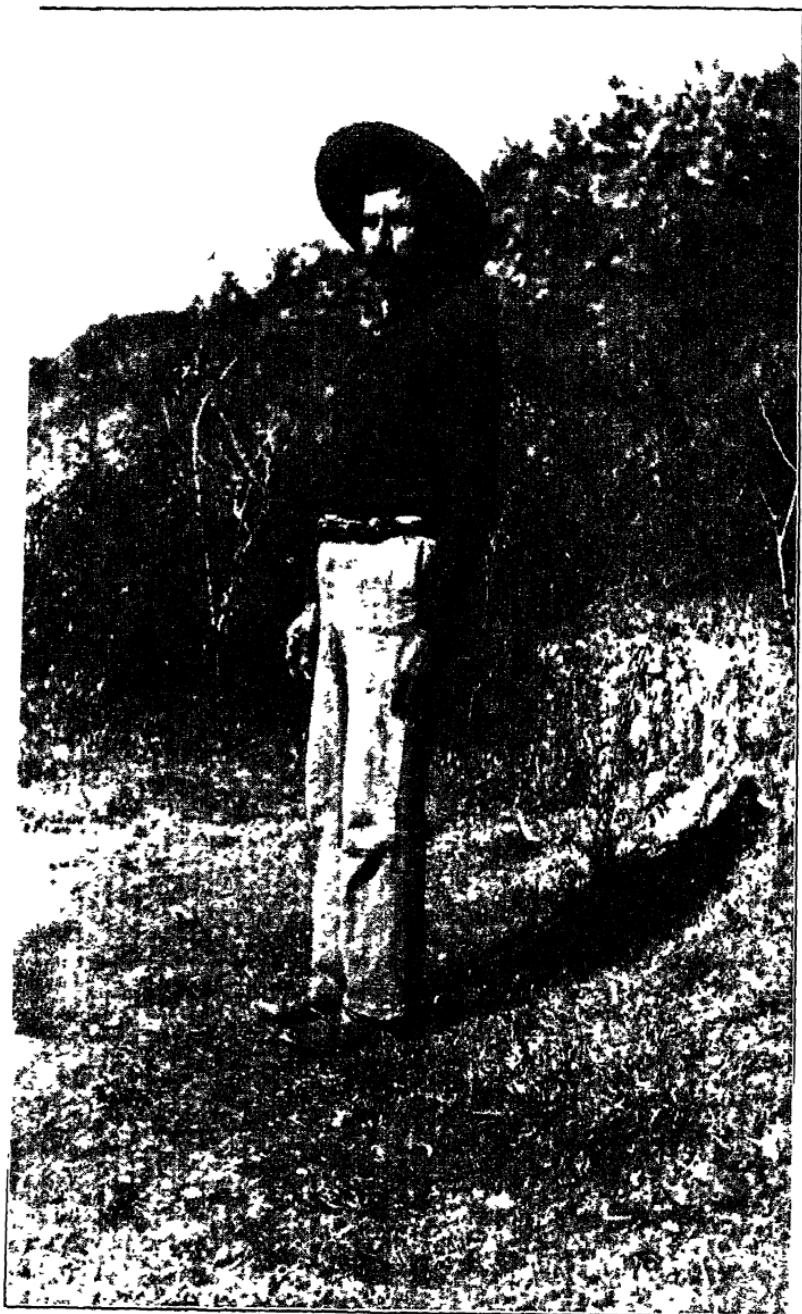
Two saddle mules and a pack mule were placed at my disposal by Mr. McCarthy, of the Sinaloa Land Company, my provisions and outfit purchased. Preparations finally completed, I arranged to leave Culiacan on the morning of November twenty-eight.

I had planned an early start, but plans go awry in Mexico, where one has to depend upon native servants; for neither abuse nor prayer will rouse a Mexican mozo out of the even tenor of his languid way or inspire in him a semblance of activity. My mozo, in spite of his superior personality, was no exception to the rule, and though I had directed him to be ready with the mules promptly at seven o'clock, it was not until ten that he appeared, placid and smiling. Even then, in spite of my impatience, I had to wait still another half-hour while he returned to the *masson* for some forgotten article.

My friends, the miners, had warned me to order



On the canyon trail



Wilkinson

the mules for five o'clock if I wished to leave at seven, but I had not heeded the warning. Now, while I awaited the pleasure of my mozo, they proceeded to give me further advice and warnings which were calculated to put me on the alert and add to my wisdom. They looked upon me not exactly as a tenderfoot, perhaps, but as a stranger in a strange land who was not quite familiar with the conditions, and who might well profit by a little instruction.

"What kind of a gun have you?" asked one.

"A Colt forty-five," I answered.

"That's good. Them's the best," said he, "a good old single-action. You better buckle it on soon's you get out of town, and keep it prominent and handy, and loose in the holster, for sometimes there's hold-ups. If any stranger you meet puts his hand on his gun you get yours out first an' shoot, an' ask questions afterward. But never pull your gun unless you're goin' to use it, and when you do pull it, kill every greaser in sight, so's there won't be no one t' tell tales. If one gets away he's plum sure t' get you or make trouble for you afterwards. One of our boys was held up one day by two greasers, an' he got in trouble by not killin' 'em. They had th' drop on him, but he was pretty quick with his Colt an' they did n't shoot straight. When they saw he was ready for 'em they was scared and run. He could have got 'em both, but there was more fun seein' 'em run, an' he just plugged one in th' arm for luck and to hurry 'em up some. Then he shot in th' air, and laughed till they was out of sight, which was n't long, seein' they was some anxious t' disappear.

"After a while he come back to town, and there

them two greasers was waitin' for him. They had him arrested for holdin' *them* up. They both swore in court he did it, and with two witnesses against his word things looked pretty bad for him, and he was some worried. When th' judge asked him what he had to say for himself, he says, in a injured sort of tone:

"‘Judge, do you suppose it’s probable that either of them fellers would be livin’ if I’d pulled my gun on ‘em? When an American shoots he most generally kills, an’ don’t make no botch of it by just scratchin’ a man’s arm. I don’t brag, Judge, but I generally shoots pretty straight. Now, you don’t suppose I’d have let ‘em go, do you?’"

"‘No,’ says th’ judge, ‘I think you’d have killed ‘em both. Any American would have. You’re discharged.’"

"Th’ moral is," added the prospector, "kill th’ greaser that draws on you and all th’ witnesses he has with him, and you won’t have any trouble afterward."

I thanked my advisor, and remarked that I had a good mozo, and I thought that between us we made a rather formidable outfit, and would get through all right.

"Keep an eye on your mozo too," advised another of my friends. "Don’t be too sure of him, an’ don’t be too confidin’. You can’t always trust ‘em. There’s lots of ‘em would knife you for your outfit. Once there was a stranger started out from here on a prospectin’ trip with a mozo he picked up in town just like you’ve done. Th’ stranger was a new hand in th’ country, and thought th’ greaser was a innocent feller with

wings sproutin' ready to go to glory, and he trusted th' greaser to anything. They was ridin' in th' mountains one day when th' mozo, bein' ahead, slips off his mule and runs back, sayin': 'Give me your rifle, quick, I want to shoot a deer I see.' Th' man gives up th' gun, and before he knows it th' greaser has him covered, and says, 'You 're th' deer,' and shoots.

"After a while th' man comes to. His outfit is gone an' so is th' mozo, an' he 's pretty bad off. But he takes to crawlin' an' strugglin' along, an' after two or three days reaches an Indian shack, his wound all maggoty, an' he most dead. Th' Indians packed him right off to town, an' th' doctor fixed him up an' he got well.

"Th' mozo thought the man was dead when he left him an' took his outfit an' money, an' he went to town and got drunk an' showed off. He was caught an' died from absorbin' too much lead from *Rurales'* rifles.

"I'm just tellin' you this so you'll look out for *your* mozo, an' do all the gun-handlin' yourself, an' sleep with one eye open nights, for they 're all mighty handy with knives."

At length the mozo said all was ready. I shook hands with my comforting friends, and, amid many wishes that "nothin' would happen" to me, mounted, and rode away. It was a beautiful, balmy day with an atmosphere as clear as crystal. My heart beat high with the expectation of adventure and the joy of life, as we rode out of the cluttered town and turned toward the distant mountains, rising before us in majestic grandeur, their lofty blue peaks cut in sharp silhouette against the lighter blue of a perfect sky.

CHAPTER XXII

INTO THE FOOTHILLS

MY mozo's name was Barragan, though I called him Wilkinson for short. "Wilkinson" was easier to remember than "Barragan" and not nearly so hard to pronounce; and besides, it was the only word with an English sound that I was ever able to make him comprehend. I tried it on him two or three times, and after that he accepted it and answered to it. I used other English words in addressing him, on occasion, but he did not understand them. It was just as well he did not, for sometimes my remarks might have disturbed his equanimity of temper.

Our saddle mules were excellent young animals. My own I dubbed Bucephalus, though her sex did not warrant it, neither did her action. She was a very meek and well-behaved animal, though she sometimes had ideas of her own that did not coincide with mine. For instance, when we forded a stream it nearly always occurred to her that it would be a delightful sensation to lie down in the water, and on these occasions I had to bring strong arguments to bear before I could convince her that bathing with a rider would be detrimental to her health. Occasionally, too, when we halted, she conceived the idea that it would be nice to roll with me on her back, and several times she dropped to her knees with that not very laudable object in view, before I could persuade her that it

was not good form. Then she always assumed an injured air, and for half an hour would not be very cheerful. But on the whole, Bucephalus was a good mule and I became attached to her.

Our pack mule was a self-centred individual, with but one eye and a halt in one shoulder. I called her Maud. She was a veteran of many trails, and knew what she wanted and what she did not want. One thing she did not want was to go on that trip. She was very docile and nice until we reached the outskirts of Culiacan. Then it dawned upon her that we had destined her for a long journey somewhere, unless she took prompt action to divert us from our intention. Wilkinson, tranquilly smoking a cigarette and fanning his spurs against his mule's side to keep it in motion, was jogging along ahead, Maud following, with Bucephalus and myself in the rear enjoying the distant prospect of the mountains. Maud concluded that it was an opportune moment to assert her disapproval of our plans, and before we realized her intention she turned and bolted back toward Culiacan. We cornered her, to her disgust, after a half-mile run, and then, to guard against a repetition of her unseemly behavior, one end of a lariat was fastened about her neck, the other end to Wilkinson's saddle horn, and for a while she trotted along quite meek and contrite.

The road was very muddy, and we were compelled to go slowly and pick our way to avoid quagmires. Pack trains, laden with produce from outlying haciendas, crawled past us on their way to market. One long train of burros and mules, laden with lumber from the foothills, interested me particularly. Each animal carried two great planks of white mahogany,

one lashed on each side, giving the burros the appearance of animated sheds. These planks must have weighed fully a hundred and fifty pounds each. As we were passing them, one of the animals fell under its excessive load, and was unable to rise to its feet again until its burden was removed. The planks are cut by hand, two or three days' journey inland, and packed by this method to Culiacan, whence they find their way to the manufacturer.

We rode through two or three small villages during the morning and early afternoon, but they were notable only for their squalor. In front of a hut in one of these villages, a little boy and girl were selling fruit. The girl had an unusually attractive face, with big wondering eyes, that looked at me so wistfully, and I fancied appealingly, I was impelled to rein in my mule and purchase some of her oranges. Then I noticed that in marked contrast to the average peon child she was scrupulously clean and wore shoes and stockings. After I had paid them for the oranges I dropped some loose centavos into the hands of each of the little ones, and the look of pleasurable surprise, the bright smile, and the polite "*Mucha's gracias, señor,*" rewarded me a hundred-fold.

For several miles beyond Culiacan the land is, for the most part, under cultivation. Fields are fenced by barbed wire or surrounded by hedges of organ cacti, to protect the crops from wandering cattle. The country is level, reaching back with a very gentle and almost imperceptible rise toward the foothills of the distant Sierras. But gradually, as we drew away from Culiacan, the tilled and fenced fields grew fewer, until they gave place finally to timber and wild



“Each animal carried two great planks”



“Mucha gracias, señor”

pasture land, and in mid-afternoon the wide and well-beaten, but muddy, trail narrowed down to a bridle-path, dry and hard. This was a relief, for the mud had held us down to a pretty slow gait. Now with firm ground, and no quagmires to circumvent, we were enabled to proceed at a fast trot and make fairly good time.

Maud objected strenuously to increasing her speed, and held back to such an extent that I finally signalled Wilkinson the suggestion that we change our formation. "Signalled" is the proper word, for I used that half of the Spanish language expressed with the hands. The vocal half I had not mastered sufficiently. We ceased hauling Maud along by the lariat, undid it from her neck, and Wilkinson took his position behind her with his quirt, which he was to use freely upon her hinder extremities, as an inducement to speed. Bucephalus and I took the lead. This we did with good results, and a stiff trot was attained.

Occasionally I glanced back, to see Wilkinson working his spurs on his own mount, and the quirt on Maud, regularly and persistently, like a well-lubricated machine, and shouting what sounded like "*Vamonos! Vamonos! Anderle!*" — words which were quite unintelligible to me, but which Maud seemed to understand, for she had a decidedly pained and surprised expression upon her countenance. Our new method of procedure proved so successful that it was maintained for the rest of the journey. Though Wilkinson occasionally complained of a lame arm through strenuous exertions with the quirt, he was quite satisfied with it; and so was I, for when things grew monotonous I had only to glance behind at him and Maud for diversion.

Shortly after dark we caught the distant glimmer of a light and presently drew up in front of a hut, or rather shed, where, by the light of a pine knot, a young woman was grinding corn for tortillas, while her husband lounged on a rough bench and smoked cigarettes. Before we dismounted Wilkinson opened negotiations with the man for the entertainment of ourselves and our animals, and when the terms were finally settled I paid in advance the amount agreed upon. This advance payment was probably required because we were, on the whole, a pretty rough and suspicious-looking outfit.

But Wilkinson was an adept at making friends. His suave manners and well-poised rhetoric soon quieted the last suspicion of the most reluctant native. And so it was in this instance. In a short while after our mules were unsaddled and unpacked, and turned into a corral to feed, and we ourselves had sat down to cultivate the acquaintance of our host, an onlooker would have supposed that Wilkinson and he were two brothers, just met after a long separation.

When our coffee was made over their fire, the man and woman both protested against our eating cold provisions from our bags, and the woman insisted upon setting before us hot tortillas and frijoles, the latter very gritty, but palatable. Their hospitality even extended to their beds. I had expected to sleep upon the ground, but when I indicated my desire to retire two canvas cots were brought forth — I am sure the only ones the pair possessed — and Wilkinson made my bed on one, with my saddle bags for a pillow and my blanket for covering, while he appropriated the other to his own use. Then the man and woman

left us in full possession of their home, to take up their quarters in a neighboring hut, whose flickering light we could see through the trees in the distance.

Wilkinson was a good mozo and exceedingly careful of my comfort. In spite of my indicated desire to do such services for myself, he always persisted in making my bed, and bringing me a drink of water before I lay down, and even pulled off my riding boots when I stooped to remove them. When I was settled in my blankets at night, he would get my cartridge belt and revolver, and place them within reach of my hand. It was my custom when I entered a native hut to hang my belt and gun upon a peg to show my hosts that I considered them my friends, and had no fear that they would do me harm; but Wilkinson, in spite of his brotherly attitude toward all, in reality trusted no one that he did not know, and took no chance with treachery.

The air was cool and exhilarating, the night was calm, and the stars, in the clear subtropical sky, shone exceedingly bright — one of those peaceful, delicious nights that bring with them the joy of life, and that inexplicable charm and fascination peculiar to the wilderness. Our beds were spread under a thatched roof, supported by four posts. Beneath was Mother Earth and there were no walls to shut from us the great free out-of-doors. A sense of perfect contentment and freedom possessed my soul as I settled to rest, and I was thankful that, for a time at least, I had escaped from the four prison walls of a hotel chamber.

I was sinking into a blissful unconsciousness, when suddenly I was lifted several inches bodily and dropped with a thud. Then a familiar grunt, and some lesser

squeals, advised me that an old sow and her pigs were taking up their quarters beneath my cot. The sow had stood up directly under me, lifted me upon her back, and when she settled again dropped me, the slack of the canvas saving me from rolling out of bed. Wilkinson heard her too, and immediately gave her a whack with a stick that sent her away with complaining squeals. But she was a persistent brute, and returned again and again, to be driven away each time by the faithful mozo, who varied his whacks with hisses and a monotonous flow of Spanish, which I judged by the intonation consisted of choice phrases not adapted to polite society. I do not know how long the contest lasted, for I finally dropped asleep before the sow had decided that the shelter of my bed was not a proper place to herd her brood.

It was still starlight when we arose and saddled up, and day was just breaking when we hit the trail, without waiting for breakfast, which Wilkinson indicated to me we should eat farther on.

A heavy fog lay around us and moisture dripped from everything. It was chilly, too, and I was glad to get started. But soon the sun arose and lifted the fog like the raising of a curtain on a stage, and disclosed a world of beauty. Trees, shrubs, and grass, wet with dew, glistened as though encased in polished silver. Wild flowers bloomed along our trail amid cacti and other more or less unfamiliar vegetation, and with the waking day the birds burst into song.

The country was growing rougher. We were in the first foothills of the mountains now, and our trail rose and fell over hills and into valleys. After a two hours' ride we came upon another hut, where an old woman

resided who seemed to be a friend of Wilkinson's. We dismounted here and made our coffee over her fire, and when we sat down to eat our canned meat and store biscuits, she set before us a dish of tortillas and native cheese.

We did not halt again until evening, when we rode into a small village of adobe huts, the centre of a hacienda, and secured entertainment in one of them. The place was like a cellar and void of every means of comfort. The night was one of the most miserable of the trip. My bed was the abode of innumerable parasites that fed upon my flesh, men and women shouted and talked in an adjoining apartment, and gaunt, swarthy, bedraggled, unkempt women, with matted hair hanging down their backs and carrying smoky, flickering torches above their heads, flitted back and forth through my room like evil spirits.

Once, long after midnight, after a degree of quiet had settled upon the place, some one was seized with a violent fit of coughing, then another and another, until it seemed as though the whole numerous household were afflicted. It gave me a vague feeling that I was in a pest-house of some kind, but it was only whooping-cough perhaps. A young mining engineer told me that he once spent a night in one of these huts where a member of the family was ill. He did not inquire into the nature of the sickness until morning, and then discovered it to be smallpox. In due time my friend was brought down with the dreadful disease, and barely came out of it with his life.

Our trail from the adobe village carried us into steeper hills, and we had some bits of rough climbing. During the day we passed the first mining prospects,

but no one appeared to be working them, and we did not halt. The earth here was of a light red-brick color, and a good deal of the soil was rough and barren, save in the valleys, which were watered by mountain streams.

At twelve o'clock we rode into the mining village of Chacala, just as the first big drops of a threatened rain began to fall. Here we were to put up for the day. We were now at the very base of the great Sierras. Above us they raised the thousands upon thousands of feet of sheer and mighty wall that we were to scale.

CHAPTER XXIII

UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE SIERRAS

AS the name indicates, Chacala is of Indian origin, and its battered appearance bears out its claim to venerable age. Down through the centre of the town runs one long street, with one-story houses of adobe and brick massed solidly together on either side. The tiled roofs of those on the north, supported by a row of pillars reaching the length of the street, extend over the wide sidewalk of well-worn brick. There are other streets reaching out from a small central plaza, but they are narrow and crooked and scarcely more than alleyways.

The place has a romantic situation, under the shadow of the towering peaks of the Sierra Madres. A small but turbulent river flows out of a canyon and through a deep gulch, to the north of the village. High and rugged hills and mighty mountains rise everywhere, their steep sides here and there dotted with fields of ripening corn or green patches of maguey, the latter supplying the thirsty inhabitants with fiery mescal.

While Wilkinson arranged for our entertainment, I bent my energies to discovering some one who could speak English, and finally was directed to a hut on one of the side streets. Here I was met by a jovial Mexican with,

“How do you do, sir?”

He shook my hand cordially, and even before I had time to introduce myself, called directions in Spanish

to some one within to set the table for two, as he had a friend to dine with him.

"It is just dinner time, sir, and you will keep me company. You are a stranger—I know before you tell me—and an American—I know that, too—and I am glad to see you. All Americans are my friends."

I thanked him heartily for his hospitable greeting, which was so unusual that I wondered if he had a mine to sell, or some confidence game to work, but I was soon assured of his sincerity. I presented my card, and explained the object of my journey.

"And you are from New York! Great old New York!" exclaimed my loquacious and genial friend. "It is adorable! I have been there much. I was for one year a student at Cornell University, but I loved the ladies too much, and my studies too little. Ah, the American ladies with their lovely complexion! I was what they call conditioned for one year, and then I failed in all the subjects at the end. The good faculty told me that I was not destined for a scholar. My walk in life should be in other fields. But I had a great time that one year! If I am dull you must excuse me. We had a dance last night, and I got very drunk. To-day is 'the day after.'"

Dinner was announced, and as we sat down I assured him he was not dull in the least; that I was very much entertained, in fact charmed, with his conversation. "I am sure," said I, "that you have had many interesting experiences, and I should be glad to hear more of them. Have you been to the United States recently?"

"No, not for three or four years. My father has

mines and land, and I am engaged in looking after them. He had me learn English so I could do it better. He confides much in me, which is proper. When I was a young lad he sent me to San Francisco, to stop with friends, and go to school, that I might learn well the language. I had some good Mexican friends there, and together we had a fine time. But I did not bother to study English, for it was hard to learn, and I kept only with those of my own tongue. There I stayed for two years, when my father wrote me to come home. In those two years, he thought, I must have learned English well. When I came back, he asked me how I did with English. I told him I could speak it as well as Spanish, and he was proud.

"But one day he said to me, 'I have to go to San Francisco on business, and you I will take to interpret.' I told him yes, I would like that. But I felt some worry, for my old man — I believe that is what they call the father in the States — has a good temper. I feared at what he might do when he learned I knew no English. While we were yet on the ship, he called me one day to interpret for him, but I could not interpret a word, and he was angry. He was properly very angry. Then he sent me to a school in New York where there were no Mexicans nor Spaniards for me to talk with, and I had to learn English. For many years he kept me there, until I could prepare for Cornell. Oh, New York! It is adorable!"

We chatted for two hours, and he informed me that the mining operations had pretty much all come to a standstill through the financial depression in the United States; for Mexico was largely dependent

upon the United States for an outlet for mine products, and many of the largest and best mines were controlled by American capital. "But Mexico," said he, "will not suffer much. It is the greatest mineral country in the world. Right here around Chacala there is lots of silver, and perhaps gold, too, that has never been found. In fact the prospectors are only beginning to look for it. You can't wash a pan of dirt in any of the canyon streams hereabouts without finding color. The mountains are loaded with it."

Before we parted he gave me some points on my route over the mountains, and reiterated the advice given me by the miners in Culiacan, to keep my gun handy.

"My experience," said I, "is that it might as well be a wooden gun. Every one I have met has been very polite, and peaceably inclined."

"That is not a safe thing to think here," he cautioned. "Some you have met would shoot you if they had a chance, but they fear an American with a gun. I always carry a six-shooter and keep it in sight. I learned to shoot well in the United States, and I can make a target at two hundred yards. It has saved my life more than once."

As I took my leave he pressed upon me a cordial invitation to visit him at his home, but unfortunately time did not permit me to do so.

A cold, drizzling rain had set in, and a mist had settled over the valley. Out on the main street I found Wilkinson sitting in front of a meat shop, and learned that this was where we were to spend the night. Wilkinson, with his accustomed celerity, had in short interval made a bosom friend of our host.

He introduced me with a Chesterfieldian bow as "Señor Wayas," and evidently eulogized me, for I was all but embraced by the susceptible butcher and his wife, and admitted like an old and tried friend to the charmed circle. My command of Spanish was so limited, however, that I could not take an active part in their spirited conversation, and I soon excused myself to walk out to a silver mine on a bluff, a mile or so from town.

The mine was closed, save the pumping station, and there was not much to see. But I found an American foreman in charge, and from him I learned that the plant was owned by a United States corporation. It had been opened and equipped a year or so before, and had a small though complete outfit, with modern, up-to-date machinery. The money depression at home had compelled them to shut down a month or two before my visit, with no prospect of immediate resumption. The foreman told me there were some other operations, all of them small ones, in the surrounding foothills, but all were idle like this one, for they were in the hands of Americans without funds.

"How," I asked, "was it ever possible to get this heavy machinery in here?"

"It all came in sections, and was set up here," he explained. "The sections usually weigh not over three hundred pounds — a mule's load — but we had a few that went beyond four hundred, and one or two nearly five hundred. Very large, powerful mules were selected to carry these, and even then the animals were ruined."

"Is it all American machinery?"

"All of ours is, but some of the mines are compelled

to use German machinery, because the Germans make theirs in smaller sections, and it's easier to transport on mule-back, though it is not so good. It's just a matter of necessity when it's used. American manufacturers can't seem to understand that it is necessary to make their machines so they can be knocked down to three-hundred-pound parcels."

This criticism of the foreman as to machinery, I may say, I had heard in other quarters as to general merchandise. The Mexican merchant orders goods packed in packages of one hundred fifty pounds, that one package may be lashed on either side of a mule for transportation. The American insists in packing in his own way, which is usually in large cases of four or five hundred pounds, and this necessitates repacking and rehandling in Mexico. The Germans, English, and French, on the other hand, comply strictly with the purchaser's directions in this respect, and capture, therefore, a good deal of trade that normally belongs to the United States, and that the United States would get with proper packing, for freight rates from American points are cheaper than from Europe, and American goods are, in general, preferred.

The drizzle had turned into a steady downpour before I reached my quarters, and it precluded further explorations. My butcher host bent himself to my entertainment. He sent his wife to a neighboring house to bring a new baby which, when it appeared, was very dirty and red-faced and made a great deal of noise with a pair of healthy lungs, and looked exactly like all other babies. They seemed to think, however, it possessed some superior qualities, for it was a relative's child. I did not offer to hold it, and

made no advances toward kissing it, though Wilkinson did; but just to show my appreciation, I chucked it under the chin with one finger, a proceeding that it seemed to appreciate, for it stopped squalling immediately, and just stared. This remarkable display of intelligence on the youngster's part, and interest on mine, pleased the older ones greatly. They laughed, and patted me on the shoulder, and were generally idiotic in their actions over the baby. My notice of the child proved a good bit of diplomacy, for it won for me an excellent piece of beef, broiled over the coals, for supper, with other unwonted delicacies.

Our butcher's business establishment consisted of a rack, on the sidewalk, upon which hung scraps of meat to tempt the good people of Chacala. His home consisted of a narrow enclosed passageway leading to the rear, and one room that answered for kitchen and general living-room, though he and his wife spent their waking hours upon the sidewalk, where he served his customers, and she sewed and gossiped with her neighbors, and kept him company. At night the meat rack was carried into the passageway, and the street door locked and barred against intruders, while the good couple retired to the kitchen.

I had my choice of places in which to sleep, but rather than deprive them I took a corner under the patio porch roof in the rear. Here a cot was brought and placed where not a great deal of the pouring rain could reach me, and Wilkinson made my bed upon it. Wilkinson himself rolled in his blankets on the floor beneath the meat rack, where we had also stored our saddles and baggage; but it was a cellar-like place and I preferred the open, even with a little wet thrown in.

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Chacala has an altitude of thirteen hundred feet, and there was a marked difference between the temperature here and in Culiacan. In fact it grew so uncomfortably cold in the night that I arose and donned woollen underwear, which I was profoundly grateful to have brought.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE THRONE OF THE GODS

THE eastern sky was just taking its first purple coloring from the still invisible sun as we mounted and rode out of Chacala. The wet earth gave forth its fragrance to the cool morning air; the rain had washed the foliage clean of its coating of brick-red dust, and transformed it into brilliant green; the birds sang a proclamation of joy and freedom to all the world. I drank the clear, pure atmosphere into my lungs in great draughts, until it intoxicated and exhilarated me to the point where I shouted with the mere delight of life. I would have sung had I not feared the consequences on Wilkinson, and a probable stampede of Maud. But even they seemed to share with me the spirit of the morning, and for the first time Maud trotted along submissively and freely, to Wilkinson's evident satisfaction.

Outside the town our trail took an abrupt turn to the left, and rose at once a thousand feet to the summit of a ridge. Here we halted for a moment to enjoy the beauty of the scenery. The first golden rays of sunlight were now glorifying the mountain peaks that lay about us in a confused mass. Below, in a hollow, Chacala nestled like a toy village, while along its northern edge the creek wound down through the gulch, a silver thread.

We followed the crest of the ridge for a little dis-

tance, then turned into a canyon where the trail hung upon the almost perpendicular face of the wall for a few miles, midway between heaven and earth, before it finally dipped to the bottom with a steep descent. Here it branched, and Wilkinson, for a time, was puzzled, but finally decided that we should ascend the rocky bed of a stream between the canyon walls.

It was rough travelling. I marvelled at the ability of the mules to keep their footing among the great bowlders piled thickly along our way, but they stepped from rock to rock setting their feet firmly, with wonderful and never failing precision. Several times we had to stop to reconnoitre. At length, on the opposite side of the canyon from where we had entered it, we found the trail where it took to the earth again above the creek bed.

Presently the ascent was begun — the great ascent of the Sierras. Thousands of feet above us towered the canyon wall, and the trail took its very face. To the right a few yards, a sharp turn to the left, another few yards, then another sharp turn, but always rising, the narrow path zigzagged like a snake, up — up — up — until it made me dizzy to look below at the receding and diminishing stream that we had recently left. Maud's back and Wilkinson's head were always directly under my feet. At one point I believe I could have leaped a sheer three thousand feet into the dark depths of the canyon without once touching earth in the descent.

We had climbed a full five thousand feet before the trail quit its windings for a gentler ascent, and here we halted and dismounted to view the world — the little, shrivelled world below. We stood on the throne

of the gods, with their kingdom at our feet. We looked down upon the tops of mountains that in the level of Chacala had towered grandly above our heads. The high foothills had shrunken into pigmy mounds. The verdant plain that spread beyond them to the Pacific was a green ribbon, and the ocean itself shimmered in the white sunlight, a mighty opal, mingling its colors with the turquoise sky, where they met in the line of far western horizon. Through my binoculars I could descry Culiacan, a mere speck on the green ribbon, but no moving thing was to be seen anywhere.

Upward our trail led, taking easy swings, now around obstructing heights, now crossing declivities with descents and rises, but always attaining a higher level. Sometimes it was very rough, and we skirted the brinks of dangerous cliffs; but we felt no fear, for the spirit of the mountains possessed us.

It was scarcely noon when clouds began to gather and settle ominously about us. Then rain came, and the wind rose in fitful gusts to dash it into our faces. It was cold, too.

"Mucho frio, mucho frio," Wilkinson complained as he wound a zerape and oil skin about him, and I shivered in my khaki suit and rubber poncho.

We did not halt to make a fire for luncheon, but contented ourselves with cold tortillas and canned dried beef, munching as we rode. It became a cheerless ride, for we were denied the diversion of viewing some of the grandest scenery in the world, and I felt a sort of resentment against the persistent low-hanging clouds and mist that obscured our view.

Once we met two mounted Mexicans, swarthy

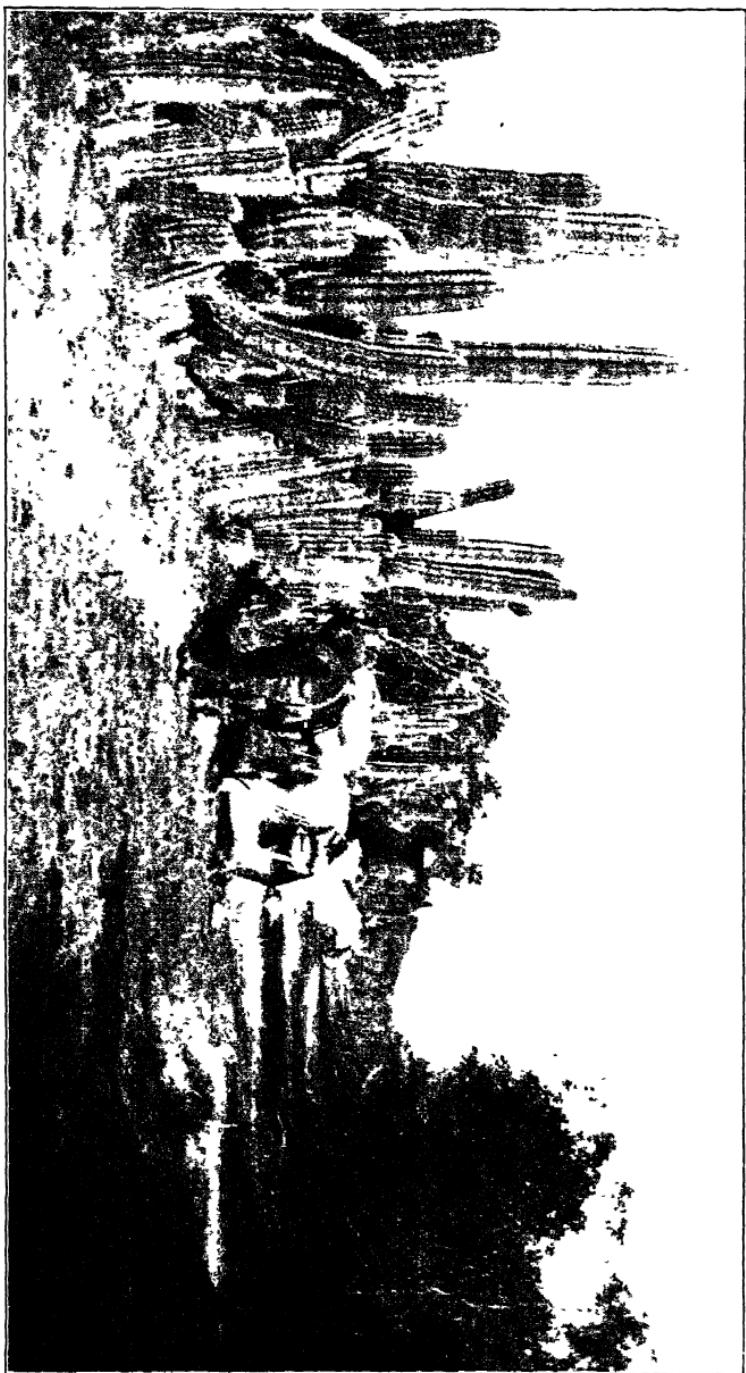
fellows, armed to the teeth with rifles, revolvers, and knives. They looked at us suspiciously as we passed, but answered my "*Buenas tardes*" civilly enough, and were soon lost in the mist and rain.

Finally, when we had climbed to an elevation of eight thousand feet, the clouds lifted for a little and we could see that all about us, in the higher peaks, snow was falling. The temperature had crawled down to forty degrees, and when, well into the afternoon, we rode into the shelter of a pine forest, and were comparatively free from the cutting wind, I was thankful. Straight and tall the trees stood, ninety to a hundred feet without a limb, and underneath was a carpet of needles with scarcely any undergrowth or shrubbery.

At one point some one had undertaken a lumbering operation, and begun the building of a camp; but it had long been abandoned, and now lay in ruins. It is probable that practical figuring disclosed the fact that the cost of transporting the lumber to market from this inaccessible wilderness was far beyond its market value, and so the magnificent primeval forest, protected by nature from the lumberman's ruthless axe, was permitted to stand.

Night came suddenly. With hardly a twilight introduction darkness fell, as though the great light of heaven had been snuffed out by an invisible hand. We were just emerging from the forest into a wide level hollow, like a great corral set amongst the mountain tops. A brook ran beside our trail. There was good feed for the mules here, and it was altogether an ideal place to camp. I was somewhat in advance, and stopped for Wilkinson to overtake me, deter-

Hedges of organ cacti



On the trail



mined to pitch my tent under the shadow of the pines, when I glimpsed the faint flicker of a light not far ahead. We made for it at once.

A little way and the outlines of a cabin appeared — if I may dignify the miserable shack with that name. We could dimly discern a shed, attached to a small log habitation in the rear. Between the unchinked logs and open gable ends of the latter came the uncertain light of a fire. We could see that it would be a disagreeable place in which to spend the night, but as the rain was pouring down, and it was now so dark that to find wood for our fire, even though we were to pitch our tent, would be tedious work, we chose the poor shelter of the hut.

Wilkinson shouted to the occupants, and in a moment the door opened and a woman appeared, her hand raised to shade her eyes as she endeavored to penetrate the blackness that surrounded us. Picturesque and weird she was as she stood framed in the doorway, in sharp silhouette against the interior glow, her tall, gaunt figure leaning forward, a mass of tangled black hair half hiding her Indian features, and a frightened child clinging to her skirts.

"Who are you?" she asked in Spanish.

"An American and his mozo. We are your friends and we crave shelter from the storm," answered Wilkinson.

"You are welcome."

The child was lifted by an arm and swung impatiently out of view, the woman retreated, and the door closed sharply.

We dismounted, unsaddled, and piled our things in the shed. The roof was leaky and the earth beneath

muddy, but it was better than the open. The mules were turned to pasture, and then we entered the room.

It was not over twelve feet square. A small fire burned in one end, in an improvised fireplace built of loose stones. There was no chimney, and the place was partially filled with smoke, though the open gables and wide-spaced logs offered small impediment to its escape. The woman was baking tortillas for supper, and four small children huddled and shivered around the fire. The oldest child was not over six years of age, the youngest perhaps one — three girls and a boy. Each was clad in no other garment than a ragged calico frock. Neither the woman nor the children wore shoes, stockings, or even sandals. The only furniture was a hewn log, raised somewhat above the earthen floor, at the back of the room, and supported by stones. There was neither chair nor table, nor other convenience of civilization. Everything, including the people, reeked in filth. As the woman slapped tortillas into form I could see, by the firelight, encrusted soil on the backs of her hands. The tortillas had cleansed the palms.

I had hardly completed my observations when the door opened and a man appeared — a great unkempt fellow, dripping wet. He was much larger than the average Mexican Indian, and coarser of feature. His thin cotton shirt and trousers, soaked with the rain, clung close to his body and set off his powerful frame. Below the knees his legs were bare, and on his feet were sandals.

The only notice he gave us was a grunt, probably intended for a greeting, as he shook the water from a shabby straw sombrero. Then, squatting upon his

haunches, he called the boy to him, and after tenderly kissing the child produced some handfuls of nuts from the depths of his pockets. They were apparently a great treat to the little ones, who made exclamations of delight, and their features glowed with pleasure as they crowded around the father.

It was plain that the boy was the favorite. It is the way of the Indian everywhere. The little girls were pushed rudely back, until a division was made of the nuts, half for the boy, the other half to be apportioned among the three girls. This seemed to be the accepted thing, for there was no murmur of protest from any of them, but rather, an overflow of appreciation for what they received. Poor little youngsters, going in ecstasies over a few paltry nuts! Half starved, their nakedness hardly covered, sleeping at night upon the bare ground, huddled around a meagre fire, never a blanket or covering, with a temperature in this high altitude hovering close to freezing-point, and with nothing else to look forward to in life, knowing nothing else, they are indeed not far removed from the primordial.

There was manifestly no room for Wilkinson and me within, and I had no desire to stay; so we retired to the shed, and by the light of a fat pine knot soon had a cheerful little camp-fire by which to dry and warm our chilled selves, and in a little while a sizzling pan of bacon and a pot of fragrant coffee set all the world to rights.

After we had eaten, I had Wilkinson make another pot of coffee and hand it indoors with some canned meat. Wilkinson was a tender-hearted fellow, and he did it with a will. Those within were making a

cheerless meal of dry tortillas and water. Our little treat was an event in their lives, for which the man thanked us in a few rough words, and the children in the pleasure that their faces reflected. They had but one cup, and no plate, and we lent them ours, and then left them to enjoy their meal while I smoked my pipe and ruminated upon the share that chance plays in casting one's lot in life.

The rain ceased before bedtime. We spread our tent upon the muddy earth near the fire and rolled into our blankets upon it. Wilkinson placed my six-shooter between us, and with a feeling of blissful comfort I fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXV

LOST IN THE SNOW

A SLIGHT sound as of some one moving about awoke me. I had unconsciously covered my head with my blanket as I slept, and I threw the covering aside. I could see no one. A new fire, however, struggling into being where our night fire had died, told me that Wilkinson was up. There was absolute silence. The stars shone with unusual brilliancy — a million gems — so close I fancied I could almost pluck them from their settings in the blue-black heavens.

I arose, and looking to the north saw the Great Dipper and Polaris, just above the horizon, and knew that morning was near, for in that latitude Polaris is visible only in the morning. In the starlight I could discern the retreating figure of a man in the open space that surrounded us, the dark outline of forest beyond. Wilkinson was looking for the mules, that he might bring them in in time to eat their corn at leisure before we saddled up at daylight.

The morning was cold and crisp, with a tang of frost in the air. I returned to the fire, threw on more wood, and by the light searched the depths of my camp bag for woollen socks and a heavier woollen outer shirt. I found them, but to my chagrin discovered that I had left my Pontiac shirt at Culiacan. Now I needed it, for before the day was ended we should

be in snow at the top of the world. But I was glad of the instinct that had led me to bring even such warm clothing as I had, and I slipped into it with thankfulness.

Wilkinson had thoughtfully set a kettle of water near. I put it over for coffee, and then sat down to wait. The water boiled and I took it off,—and still no Wilkinson. An hour passed, and the first hint of light appeared in the east. Another half-hour, and broad day broke. I began to be concerned at the mozo's long absence. I walked down on the open, but there was no sign of mule or man. It was sunrise when at length I saw them coming a mile away.

Wilkinson was plainly in bad humor when he rode up with Maud and Bucephalus in tow. "*Mucho malo! Mucho malo!*" he exclaimed, as he dismounted and directed an angry slap at innocent-looking Maud. It turned out that she had led the others far away and into hiding in the timber, a proceeding that seemed nothing short of contemptible to Wilkinson.

The sun was an hour old when we finally started. Higher and higher we climbed until the snow was reached. Bucephalus had never seen snow before, and at the first white patch she balked. She would not step upon it, in spite of my active spurs. Finally, with long ears held forward, every nerve alert, she smelled of it, touched her nose to it, jerked it back as though stung, tried it again, grew bold and gingerly put a foot upon it, and we were off.

Clouds gathered and obscured the sun, a cutting wind arose, and the day grew raw and chill. The snow-covered trail was exceedingly slippery, and at many points dangerous. We passed around rocky

walls with a perpendicular drop of thousands of feet below us. Frequently the ascent or descent was over smooth granite, with a path not much more than a foot in width, and at hair-raising angles. The slightest misstep or stumble meant death for mule and rider.

Often, near these dangerous points, suggestive cairns surmounted by crosses told the story of tragedies. Above one particularly hazardous descent I counted a group of five of these crosses, indicating that there, probably at different times, five riders had stumbled into eternity without a moment's warning. They recalled to me the advice of a prospector in Culiacan:

"Always be ready to slide off your mule on the upper side when you're ridin' bad trail," he said, "an' if your mule stumbles, slide an' get a footin' an' let him get straight if he can, for if he goes over the brink an' tumbles down a couple o' thousand feet you don't want t' be on his back a-wingin' your way t' glory. I never tried it, but I opine it ain't pleasant, an' besides it would make your mozo feel plum lonesome t' leave him behind without at least sayin' 'adios' to him.

"Once I was ridin' along one o' them trails an' I met a feller afoot. He had on spurs an' did n't look like a pedestrian.

"Where's your mule, stranger?" I asks.

"Down there," says he, pointin' into th' canyon.

"Goin' t' look him up?" I asks, glancin' down t' th' bottom which was so deep I could n't see it.

"Nope," says he. "It's a good week's walk around, an' I reckon what's left of him an' my trappin's ain't worth th' trouble."

All around us mountain peaks rolled away in the

distance like the mighty billows of a storm-tossed sea. Huge crags, of fantastic outline, tall pines surmounting pinnacled rocks, silhouetted against banks of ominous, low-hanging clouds, mysterious depths shrouded in the darkness of night, combined to form a scene of majestic, awe-inspiring grandeur. How insignificant we puny mortals felt! We were face to face with God and His immortal works.

We wound our way out upon a ridge that dropped down into a mighty canyon on either side. At the end, where the canyons came together, we descended to the bottom of the abyss, and on the farther side rose to a still higher altitude, when to my great relief we entered a comparatively level stretch and were soon within the depths of a magnificent pine forest.

Here was a complete change of topography. The ground grew gently undulating, the tall, straight trees stood thick about us, and every vestige of rugged mountain peak and crag was shut from view. We had reached an elevation of ninety-five hundred feet.

Under the trees was spread an even carpet of snow, which covered and completely hid the trail. In blind search for it I rode ahead for some distance, and then halted for Wilkinson. He too was completely confused. Nowhere was there a mark or sign to indicate our course. Vainly we circled amongst the trees for some depression in the snow, or token to guide us, but none was found.

There was nothing to do but keep an easterly direction. We jogged along in a disturbed state of mind for several miles, when we came upon some trees tapped for rosin. Not far beyond we discovered an improvised lean-to, which had sheltered a man during

the previous night, and the still smoking embers of a fire. The camper's tracks led away in the direction we were taking. They were the tracks of a man in sandals, as prints of bare toes in the snow plainly indicated.

For two hours we followed the trail, then suddenly broke into a clearing in the centre of which stood a small log hut, with smoke issuing from its open gables. As we approached, a tall young Indian, thinly clad, with bare legs and sandalled feet, came out to give us a smiling welcome. He was quite alone, and invited us to join him at his fire.

The invitation was accepted, and over a kettle of hot coffee, which Wilkinson brewed, we learned that we had gone many miles astray. The Indian offered to lead us by a short-cut to a trail that would take us to Canelas, a mining village to the northeast, at which point we could resume the regular trail direct to Tepehuanes.

The short-cut that the Indian proposed was little used save by footmen, and was rough, and led over some high elevations, but he assured us our animals would find no difficulty in following it, and it would save us at least a day's travelling. Sleet and snow were falling and it was very cold. In my broken Spanish I suggested that he could not travel in the snow with only sandals on his feet, but he laughed, and explained that it was no hardship. He had never worn anything else.

We finally accepted the Indian's offer, and he led us off over one of the roughest trails it has ever been my fortune to travel. Out of the gently rolling country we passed,—out of the great pines,—skirted

the upper wall of a magnificent canyon, and then wound up and up around a jagged peak until we had reached an altitude of eleven thousand feet. From this point we dropped a thousand feet or so, came again to a more level stretch, and at nightfall halted in front of a typical mountain hut, a little larger than the one in which we had spent the previous night, and with two rooms, but otherwise its counterpart.

The hut was vacant, and we took possession. The earthen floor was partially covered with snow, which had drifted in between the logs, but a rousing fire of pine knots, a pan of bacon and a pot of coffee, a comforting pipe, and then a bed of fragrant fir boughs upon which to recline and watch the glowing coals, transformed it into a palace of bliss, to be remembered as the best of all our mountain camps.

In the morning the mules stampeded. Wilkinson succeeded in capturing Bucephalus, and at daybreak mounted her and rode off to trail the others in the snow. Happily he found them, and an hour and a half later led them into camp.

The temperature had dropped below freezing, and a crust had formed on the snow. Our smooth-shod mules slipped dangerously on the rocks, where the snow had blown away and left a glaze of ice, but we met with no mishap.

All day we were surrounded by scenery of sublime grandeur. Pinnacles and towers, castles and mighty fortresses of granite, canyons deep and dark, lay about us. At one point a creek fell from the rocks above to be lost in a cloud-mist below, whence it sent back a thundering roar from the lower depths. Our trail passed between wall and torrent, midway of its

fall, and we were drenched with spray as we made the passage under it.

Presently we began to descend. At seventy-eight hundred feet the last of the snow was seen. Travelling improved perceptibly, and the temperature became much milder. Wilkinson, clad in two suits of under-wear, three flannel shirts, two pairs of trousers, and two pairs of thick socks, had been shivering and complaining constantly of "*mucho frio.*" Now he melted into geniality. The Indian, trotting ahead, though half naked had appeared quite impervious to the cold. With him it was a matter of course, for he was a mountain man.

In a gentle hollow we came upon some mules browsing, and a little farther on found the muleteers gathered around a camp-fire. We halted for a moment to pass the time of day, and they gave us some native apples. The fruit was of excellent flavor, though only seedlings.

Beyond the muleteers' bivouac we met a horseman armed with rifle and revolver, and on foot, at his heels, two similarly armed men, who carried their rifles loose on their arms, as though ready for instant use. They were swarthy, ill-looking fellows, and Wilkinson became instantly nervous. I glanced behind me and saw that the footmen had stopped to watch us. At the first bend in the trail Wilkinson halted and discharged our Indian guide. Almost before I could hand the fellow some silver, and thank him for his service, the anxious Wilkinson was urging me to "*Vamanos! vamanos!*" and for a little while we travelled faster than at any time since leaving Chacala, but still not fast enough for the reckless Wilkinson, who was

manifestly afraid of the armed men in the rear. We were a pretty rough-looking outfit, however, and if they were bent upon mischief they probably did not deem us worthy their attention. Not until we had met and passed a pack train did Wilkinson settle again into his usual manner.

We were now on the Canelas trail, a regular line of travel as the well-beaten path indicated. In a little while we began to drop from the heights, and as we swung around a point beheld the red-tiled roofs and white buildings of the town nestling deep in a hollow below, at the junction of two canyons. The descent was like going down stairs, and with every step the atmosphere grew mellower. Finally we passed green corn-fields, guavas, oranges, and lemons hanging yellow on the trees, banana fields, and gardens. Wilkinson plucked two delicious cherimoyas from a tree and handed one to me.

An hour before sunset we rode into the narrow streets of the picturesque old town. We were not yet over the divide, and a native whom we met, who could speak some English, told me that as the trails beyond, normally bad, were now buried and hidden by the snow, it would be foolhardy to proceed until a day or two of sunshine had cleared them. No native, he said, would attempt the journey with the prevailing conditions. I decided, therefore, to remain at least one day in Canelas, glad of the opportunity to give the mules a rest, for they were quite spent.

CHAPTER XXVI

AN OLD TOWN AND THE MINES

CANELAS lies in a bowl-shaped depression at the head of two canyons. The name means "corral," and is indicative of its shut-in position. At no point is the base of the bowl more than half a mile wide. On all sides the mountains rise almost sheer, their jagged peaks piercing the blue heavens a mile overhead, to form the serrated rim of the mighty bowl. Canelas lies on the Pacific side of the Sierra Madres, and at an elevation of forty-five hundred feet above sea level.

Since the days of the Spaniard this has been a mining town. The better buildings, clustered around the plaza, were designed by the conquerors, not only as dwellings but as fortifications in which the inhabitants might find a safe retreat from the then hostile Indians who infested the mountain fastnesses. Many of the old walls of solid masonry are fully four feet thick, and besides the doorways have no other opening than occasional narrow slits beneath the high ceiling, which served in other days as loopholes. The floors are of stone or brick, and the doors of ponderous oak or mahogany, which only cannon balls could have battered down. The dungeon-like rooms are filled with the damp and must of centuries.

I saw no glass windows in the town, save those in its two crumbling churches. One of these churches

was built in the sixteenth century, the other is doubtless of seventeenth-century origin. Now, though both are open at all times to individual worshippers, only occasionally does a padre come to say mass. Wild flowers and rank weeds alike run riot in the churchyards, and within the churches are sombre and smoky walls hung with grotesque caricatures of saints.

Wilkinson and I shared a little cell-like room opening upon the patio of one of the old Spanish houses. It had no window or even loophole to admit light and air, and we were forced to sleep with an open door or we should have smothered. The place was as damp and dank and cheerless as a cellar.

There was one canvas cot, which I appropriated, while the mozo curled in his blankets on the stone floor. Two old Spanish women presided over the establishment with a grace and courtesy worthy a mansion. They were very old women indeed, and so shrivelled and shrunken that I almost fancied them the original occupants of their time-worn home, living on and on through the centuries.

Some friends of Wilkinson's occupied the adjoining house, and there we were served our meals. They, too, were of Spanish origin, and most hospitable. The family consisted of a widowed mother, a grown daughter, and an alert, handsome boy of fifteen. They were very poor, but far superior to the average peons with whom I had come in contact. They were proud, too, and so strenuously declined my money in payment for our entertainment, which I urged upon them in advance in view of their very evident need, that I had finally to rely upon Wilkinson's tact and rhetoric to induce them to accept it. Their



Guava trees in a garden, Canelas

A street in Canelas



persons and their home were scrupulously clean, and their cooking, though typical of the country, was superior. The memory of their cordial reception, their hospitality, and their constant courtesy during our two days' halt in Canelas I shall long cherish as one of the pleasantest of my Mexican experiences.

Silver mining is still carried on in Canelas, though at the time of my visit the mines were, unfortunately, all temporarily closed. On the outskirts of the village, I visited a native ore mill, where, with its ancient *rastra* and old-time methods, silver is extracted from quartz to-day just as it was extracted in the same mill in the early Spanish days. There was the same ponderous wheel of stone, hauled around in its pit by weary mules as it crushed into powder the metal-laden quartz, and there was the same charcoal furnace where the silver was melted and run into bars.

Down within the canyon below the town is a small modern plant. Two thousand feet above it, on the side of the steep mountain, is the mouth of the tunnel from which the ore for this mill is dug. From the tunnel to the mill there is a slide down which the ore shoots by its own momentum. The whole country hereabouts is mineralized, but is so difficult of access that as yet comparatively little advantage has been taken of it.

The extent of the mineral resources of the western Sierras is almost beyond belief, being practically inexhaustible. Everywhere is hidden treasure. Sinaloa alone has, for instance, an area of nearly thirty-five thousand square miles, and three-fourths of the State is mineralized. Silver is the chief metal, though large amounts of gold, usually found in pockets, have

made more than one miner a millionaire. I was told of a case where pocket gold paid all expenses of operating a silver mine, and left the silver clear profit. In the northern part of the State there are also well paying copper mines, and some lead has been found.

When I was in Culiacan an American prospector who was stopping at the Hotel Cosmopolita, while riding across a corn-field not far from town one day, noticed the outcropping of a vein of quartz. He uncovered it for several rods, took specimens from various points, and had them assayed. They were all rich in silver. He had made, in this unexpected manner, a lucky "strike."

The mines of Sinaloa are at present producing annually 14,000,000 pesos, and employ 8,000 foreigners and natives. The most important of these are the Tajo, Panuco, Candelaria, Contra Estace, Guadalupe de los Reyes, Zapopan, San Antonis, Butters Mg. Syn., Nima Duendo, San Vicente, Jesus Maria, and La Piramida, all of which are owned by Americans or Mexicans. There are also some four hundred and sixty odd workings partially developed but now lying idle, through lack of sufficient capital to install the necessary machinery to operate them profitably. In spite of this the State has hardly begun to be scratched over, and prospectors are only commencing their work.

Inaccessibility, with lack of transportation facilities, has been the chief drawback to successful mining. Only the richest deposits can be worked with profit, owing to the excessive cost of freighting the ore to smelters. All this must be done on pack mules, and during the dry season the cost per cargo — 300 pounds — to deliver the ore at Mazatlan is from six to twelve

pesos, and in the wet season double as much. Add to this the freight charges by steamer to the smelter, the expense of transporting provisions and supplies to the mines, together with the cost of working, and it will be seen that none but exceedingly rich ore can be handled at a profit. For this reason hundreds of mines containing medium and low grade ore, which in a more accessible position would be highly profitable, now lie idle.

There is no custom smelter within several hundred miles, and ore must be sent to San Francisco or Tacoma to be smelted. However, relief is looked for soon. A concession has been granted Mr. Epps Randolph, of Tucson, Arizona, to construct a first-class custom smelter of large capacity at Mazatlan, and with the railroad opened to that point work upon the smelter will be begun and pushed rapidly to completion.

It is expected that with the coming of the railroad life will be injected into mining enterprises. Already some of those in operation are planning to install complete systems of cyanide plants, talk is heard of small mines, long dormant, being cleaned out and opened up, and prospects for the future are most encouraging.

The chief causes of failure, not taking into consideration fraudulent promoters, are either inexperience or lack of sufficient capital to put mines upon a profit-paying basis. Many men with little or no practical knowledge of mining come here and attempt to conduct a business of which they are ignorant.

A couple of years ago an Englishman travelling in Mexico obtained control of a property in the high Sierras. He went home to London and induced some

of his wealthy countrymen to join him in the enterprise. They advanced the necessary cash, while he agreed to furnish the brains and experience, though in the latter he was wholly lacking, and not so overstocked with the former that you would notice it. In due time he arrived at Mazatlan, accompanied by an English groom in livery. The English groom in livery was destined to groom the sportive mule. He was quite an innovation. The Englishman wore a monocle, which was also an innovation in those parts.

They retired — the Englishman, the liveried groom, and the monocle — to the mountains, taking with them a large corps of native laborers. A lot of digging was done, and the time came to take out the produce to be shipped to the smelters. Then it was found that the cost of transportation was more than the ore was worth. They had not thought before of this little item.

The Englishman decided at this critical point that they needed a tramway. A tramway would do it! With a tramway to bring the ore down from the heights they would just coin sovereigns. So he sent to England and asked the confiding investors to send an engineer to build the tramway. The engineer came, and the would-be miner ordered him to build the tramway — just as he might have ordered his tailor to make him a new suit of clothes.

While I was in Mazatlan I met the engineer. He was waiting for cable instructions to return home, and he poured his troubles into my ears. He was not in good humor, and he had not built the tramway.

“Now, don’t you know, it’s not a tramway they need, but a blooming flying machine,” he explained.

"No engineer can build a tramway on those grades, don't you know? It's like going up the side of a house, and the mountain is so blooming high you can't see the top from the bottom."

This is a specimen of some of the mining operations undertaken in Mexico.

Worked with intelligence by experienced men, and upon sound economic business principles, most of the failures would have proved dividend-paying investments. Few of them can be truthfully ascribed to non-paying ore veins.

Many Mexican mine failures are due wholly to dishonest promoters. These scamps secure a tract of land, dig a hole, and erect a few flimsy structures all at an insignificant cost, and then draw upon our gentle public for millions of dollars. They never work the mines and never intend to do so. They rely upon the fact that the supposed mine is far enough removed to be secure from any general investigation. Reports of the promoter's own engineers, hired to do their bidding, are given out as reliable and trustworthy, and in many of these cases, no doubt, the engineer making the report never even sees the property described.

Mining schemes of this character are frauds from their inception. Frequently dividends are paid for a year or so from moneys received for stock, for the purpose, of course, of making new dupes. The notorious Dr. Flower belongs to this class of operators. Recently a combine marketed \$25,000,000 worth of stock, at par, on the New York curb, and when a receiver was appointed to take control of the company he found but \$1.48 in bank.

There are many of these unstable or fraudulent mining enterprises being floated continually in New York, Boston, and Chicago, and small investors, who are not able personally to visit and inspect the properties, or engage a thoroughly reliable and experienced engineer to do so for them, should communicate with the American Consul on the ground. In Sinaloa, the Consul at Mazatlan is the proper authority to consult.

Scattered throughout Mexico are many old abandoned Spanish mines, some of them worked out and many of them abandoned in the early days because of the inability to separate metal from rock, under certain conditions, with the crude methods then in vogue. Some of the old workings contain surprising rewards to the industrious and patient who take them up.

A peon once staked out one of the old Spanish mines as a claim, and began digging in the old tunnel, which had lain idle for more than a century. Month after month he dug, living in the meantime upon tortillas supplied him by his neighbors, who believed him crazy and good-naturedly tolerated him in his ever present belief that "to-morrow" he would strike great riches. He was harmless and they were sorry for him. Finally, however, they grew tired of bestowing charity, and all but one declined to contribute food. They advised the digger to stop his foolishness and instead of wasting his strength in the old tunnel to go to work in the corn-field.

The one man who shared his tortillas with the miner was very poor, and his bounty was hardly sufficient to sustain life. The half-starved man worked on, however, until one day he opened a vein. It was a

bonanza. He took the man who had stood by him into partnership, and out of that old hole the two dug millions upon millions of pesos, and to-day they stand amongst the wealthiest men in Mexico.

Another peon under similar circumstances opened another mine, and became so wealthy, report says, he has offered to pay the entire national debt of Mexico.

The circular space surrounding Canelas was all under cultivation, and even on the steep mountain sides — so steep that one wonders how man can find footing there, and keep from sliding off — corn and beans are grown. Ploughing in these steep places is of course impossible, but men crawl along and plant the seed in unbroken ground, and leave the crops to take care of themselves until the harvest time.

Wilkinson got me into an awkward situation the morning of our second day in Canelas. On the previous evening he had complained of a severe headache, and to relieve it I administered a five-grain tablet of acetanilid. He noted my leatheren medicine case with much interest, and when his head cleared within an hour decided that I was a physician, and immediately sang my praises about town.

With his suave and agreeable manner, Wilkinson soon made friends of half the population. A young peon whom he met was suffering with a toothache, and he sent the fellow to me for treatment. In the few words of Spanish at my command I endeavored to explain that I was neither physician nor dentist, and had no instruments with which to draw the tooth, nor means of curing it. But the man was obdurate. My mozo had said I was a *medico*, and he ought to know. The tooth was very painful. The blessing

of the saints would rest upon me if I would exert my skill. If I had no instruments with me I had medicines, and I could surely give him something. Wilkinson had said I was a great *medico*, for I had cured him in a very short time.

Finally in self-defence I painted the gums around the offending tooth with iodine, to act as a counter-irritant, and on general principles administered a harmless dose from my limited stock.

The iodine relieved the pain, and my patient went his way rejoicing and to spread my fame broadcast. In a little while I was besieged. Applicants for treatment crowded in upon me thick and fast. I felt the pulse and looked at the tongue of each, assumed a wise expression, and as I had nothing else to give them anyway, dealt out in ample doses a specific against biliousness, until I had made ten sufferers happy.

When I returned to our quarters at dusk from a long tramp — to which I had resorted to escape my patients — I gave Wilkinson orders to have the mules saddled and ready to leave town at daylight. I was filled with misgivings as to the consequences of my more extended practice of medicine.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE INDIANS OF THE MOUNTAINS

WE were in the saddle at daybreak and five minutes later had begun the tedious ascent of the mountain barrier. For several hours we climbed steadily. Canelas shrank into the depths, and finally, as we entered the forest on the upper levels, was lost to view. Here we came into snow again, but two days of sunshine had settled it, and a pack train had broken the trail.

All day, and for several days, we rode through a magnificent forest of virgin pine. Many of the trees had been tapped by the Indians for rosin. At one point a great number of fine saw-logs had been cut and piled, but lay rotting because of no means of taking them out at a profit. At a rough estimate I should say two million feet of lumber had been cut and abandoned at this place.

On the afternoon of the day we left Canelas we passed a small Indian settlement, and toward evening entered another, where we halted for the night. There were eighteen Indians in the hut where we took up our quarters — or rather outside of which we slept upon the ground. This was the filthiest aggregation of humanity I had yet come in contact with, and evidently as degraded as filthy. I never saw anything to surpass them in this respect, even amongst Eskimos or northern Indians. There is excuse for Eskimo

filth, where the people live in snow igloos, and water can be had only by melting snow or ice over the meagre blaze of a stone lamp. But here in the mountains of Mexico, with abundant water flowing past their door in brooks of crystal purity, there is absolutely no excuse for it.

I believe these Indians never bathe at all. In fact there is a belief amongst them that to bathe is to court sickness and death, and their skin never knows the cleansing influence of water from birth until death claims their clod-laden bodies to join the clods of Mother Earth from which they sprang. There was a sick boy in a hut where a friend of mine stopped one day, and my friend suggested to the father that a bath might cure him. The father held up his hands in horror. "A bath! That would kill him!" he exclaimed. "I never bathed in my life, and my children never bathed, and never will."

Down in the low countries they do bathe — once a year. At midnight, on the twenty-ninth of June — St. Peter's and St. Paul's Day. The two good saints calm the ocean, and make the water harmless; and those within reach of the sea, who have sufficient faith in the protecting powers of the saints, gather there on that day and recklessly wash their bodies. At points removed from the coast, the twenty-fourth of June is the annual bathing day. This is St. John's Day, and that good saint has a concession to mollify the rigors of the rivers, for the benefit of the would-be clean ones. So down in the lower country people *are* clean. But here in the mountains no saint ever moves the Indians to such a desperate deed as bathing.

Like nearly all wilderness dwellers, they are exceed-

ingly accommodating, and as hospitable as circumstances allow. At every Indian hut where we spent a night, the women offered us a bit of their cookery to help out our cold victuals; and after we had eaten, invariably cleansed our cups by wiping out the coffee grounds and drying the cups on a corner of their reeking skirts. They were very kind in the performance of this and other little services.

In general, the Indians of the interior Mexican mountains are far inferior in intelligence and ambition, if not in physique, to our Indians of the United States and Canada. The difference is in race and temperamental qualities. It cannot be said that their lack of energy is due to an enervating climate, for in these mountain heights the atmosphere is crisp and inspiring, and would move any ordinary human, with red blood in his veins, to exertion. It is a climate quite different from that of the hot and humid tropics, where fever and burning sun combine to sap life and energy from man and beast alike.

Every night during the winter months the temperature drops several degrees below the freezing-point, and often the wind is sharp and piercing; yet not one of these indolent people possesses an adequate shelter. Their miserable huts usually contain a single room with an overhanging roof in front to form a shed. Between the unchinked logs one can thrust one's fist, and the wind is hardly checked.

Their fire consists of a tiny blaze, for they are very sparing of the wood. This is pure laziness. The pine forests in which they live offer an abundance of fuel for the wielding of an axe, but they shiver and suffer with the cold rather than wield the axe.

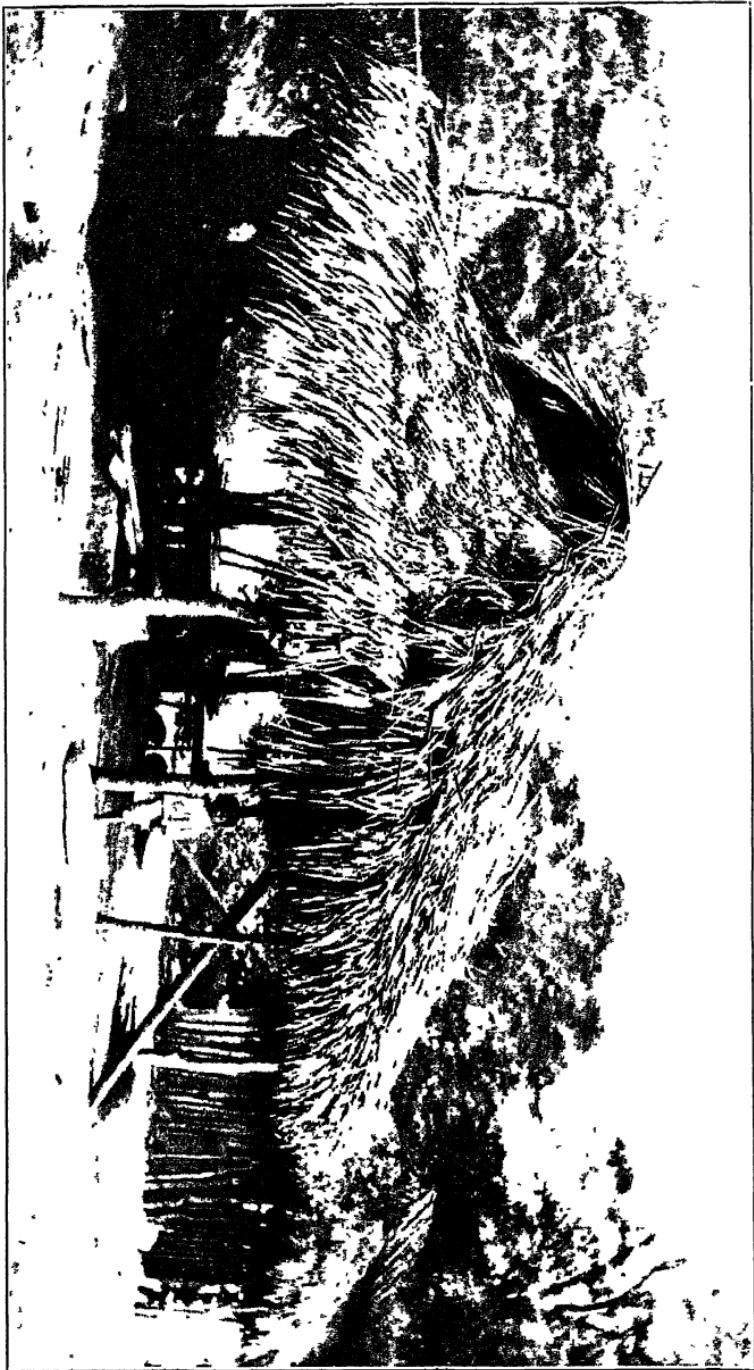
They are clad, generally, in the scantiest and thinnest of cotton garments. Some of them wear sandals, but many go barefooted. The head of the family usually owns a *zerape*, which he selfishly retains to cover his own precious body at night, while the women and children are left to huddle together upon the bare earth in a vain endeavor to keep warm.

Everywhere deer are plentiful, and there are bears and wolves and other animals with warm coats, which could be had for the hunting. But hunting demands an expenditure of vital force, and therefore the Indian rarely hunts. Occasionally he may kill a deer for the flesh, but the skin, which could be transformed into snug bed or clothing, is discarded; and he has never learned the art of making moccasins.

So far as my observation goes, there is but one thrifty, active body of Indians in all Mexico — the Yaqui Indians of Sonora. This tribe, which belongs to the Apache family, stands out in marked contrast to all other Indians of Mexico. I believe the Mexican military, as well as all who have come in contact with the Yaquis, will vouch for their initiative, energy, and activity. For a long while they played hide and seek with the soldiers, and led them a merry dance. They not only maintained themselves, but carried on a war against the Government with a persistence that is commendable.

A few of the Yaquis have sought employment on the new railroad construction work, and some of them are engaged as *cargadores* at various points on the Pacific coast. How they managed to escape detection and capture by the soldiers I do not know, but probably by travelling singly or in pairs. Numbers

A characteristic hut





A typical Yaqui Indian

of them left their country from time to time, earned and saved as much money as possible, with which to purchase fresh supplies, and then returned to bear arms in the fight their nation waged for so long against the Government, for freedom and the right of property. One of these men was employed upon the railroad bridge abutment at Culiacan. He was a full-blood, typical Yaqui Indian and a fine specimen of his race. His foreman told me he was worth any three of the other native workmen, and received double as much wages as any other man on the job, because he did not shirk, and was a hard-working, industrious, and conscientious fellow.

Originally the Yaquis were an agricultural and a home-loving people. They once possessed a rich tract of land along the Yaqui River in Sonora, and, from time immemorial, planted their corn and lived in peace with all men that left them alone. The Spaniards tried to dispossess them, but did not succeed. The Mexicans persecuted and hunted them until they were driven to desperation and were forced to fight for very existence. All they ever asked was justice—plain justice—and to be dealt with fairly. They claimed title to the land they had always held, and the right to cultivate the soil and live peaceably upon it, undisturbed. They were willing to give allegiance to the Government of Mexico, to pay taxes, and to be good citizens. Mexico, on the other hand, denied them any rights, granted their holding to rich hidalgos or corporations, and sent troops to enforce the recognition of these grants. The troops have striven to drive the Yaquis from their ancient home, they have murdered them and their women and children, or,

when captured, they have taken them as slaves to die in the fever swamps of Yucatan.

Many reliable witnesses told me they had seen bands of Yaqui captives on the Tepic road driven, like cattle, under the lash, by mounted soldiers. They saw old men and women fall by the wayside and die, and mothers bearing dead babes in their arms totter hopelessly to their doom.

During the winter I was in Mexico, sixteen Yaqui prisoners on a southward bound vessel, when off Mazatlan, jumped overboard into the sea, preferring death in the waves to an ignoble slavery in Yucatan. Six of them were drowned, and the others when retaken deplored the fate that had denied them the death of their comrades. Nothing but keenest misery could prompt such feeling.

The Yaquis fought bravely in their beautiful valley, and in the fastnesses of the mountains behind, to preserve their homes and their liberty — that was all. But if that is not the true spirit of patriotism, what is? That is what Washington and our forefathers fought for, and who can say that any ever bore arms in a more righteous cause? They fought a hopeless fight, and they knew it. They knew that they would lose in the end. There are not many of them left, and these few are subdued in the face of overpowering odds.

We hear much of the cruelty of these Yaquis, but who can blame them for killing and torturing, in retaliation for murder and torture, all Mexicans who fell within their reach? Americans used to come out of their country with blood-curdling tales of Yaqui depredation and Yaqui cruelty. But let me say that

no American ever went there with clean hands, undisguised as a Mexican, or unaccompanied by Mexicans, and attended to his own business, that had a hair of his head injured. I know Americans who so visited the Yaqui country, and who saw the burned haciendas of the hidalgos, and the dead bodies of Mexicans, and who met bands of Yaquis, but they received no injury from them. In one case I recall, a man lost and starving was given food and a guide to put him on his trail. This man himself related the incident to me.

It is charged that these Indians came down near the towns and resorted to highway robbery and the murder of innocent travellers. This charge was without foundation, and was a pretext by the Government to excuse its course toward them. The highwaymen were ordinary brigands, and many of them were American renegades, driven out of the United States. Every day, for many years, a stage has passed through the Yaqui country, which lies south of the place where these hold-ups occur. The stage is loaded with mail and valuable matter, and is open to attack by the Yaquis at many points, but it has never yet been interfered with.

But it is the same old story. It is only a repetition of our treatment, in the United States, of our Indians. It began with the landing of the Pilgrims, and it has continued ever since. We never kept faith with the Indians. We robbed them, and goaded them into fighting, and then murdered them, took their lands and freedom from them, and, finally, herded them upon inadequate reservations like cattle in a corral.

For two days we travelled at an altitude of eight

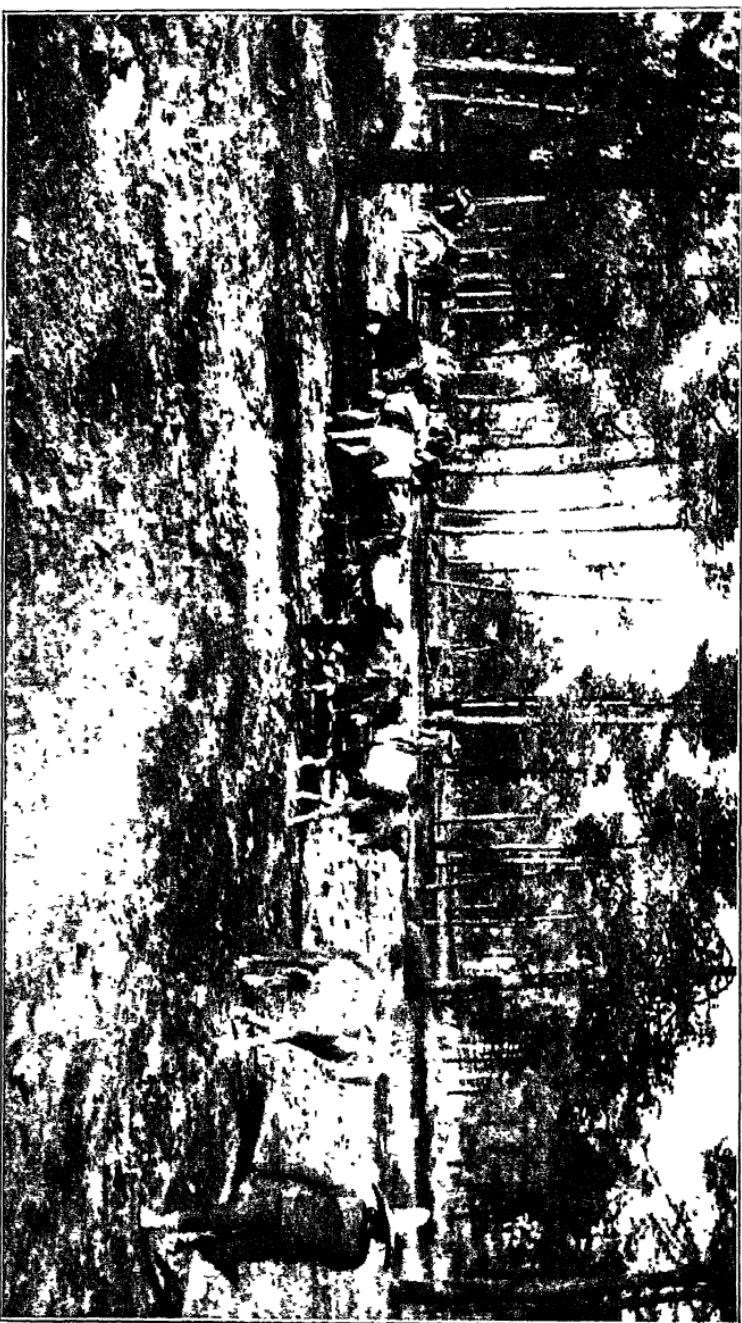
thousand feet. Here the snow had disappeared, but each morning the ground was frozen hard, a half-inch of ice covered water pools, and a heavy coat of hoar frost lay upon everything. In sheltered places like ravines and gulches, and on the shaded sides of hills, the ice remained the whole day long.

These were glorious mornings. The frost sparkled and scintillated as the sun broke brilliantly over mountain peaks; the air, with its tang of winter, was like wine; and the scenery magnificent and inspiring.

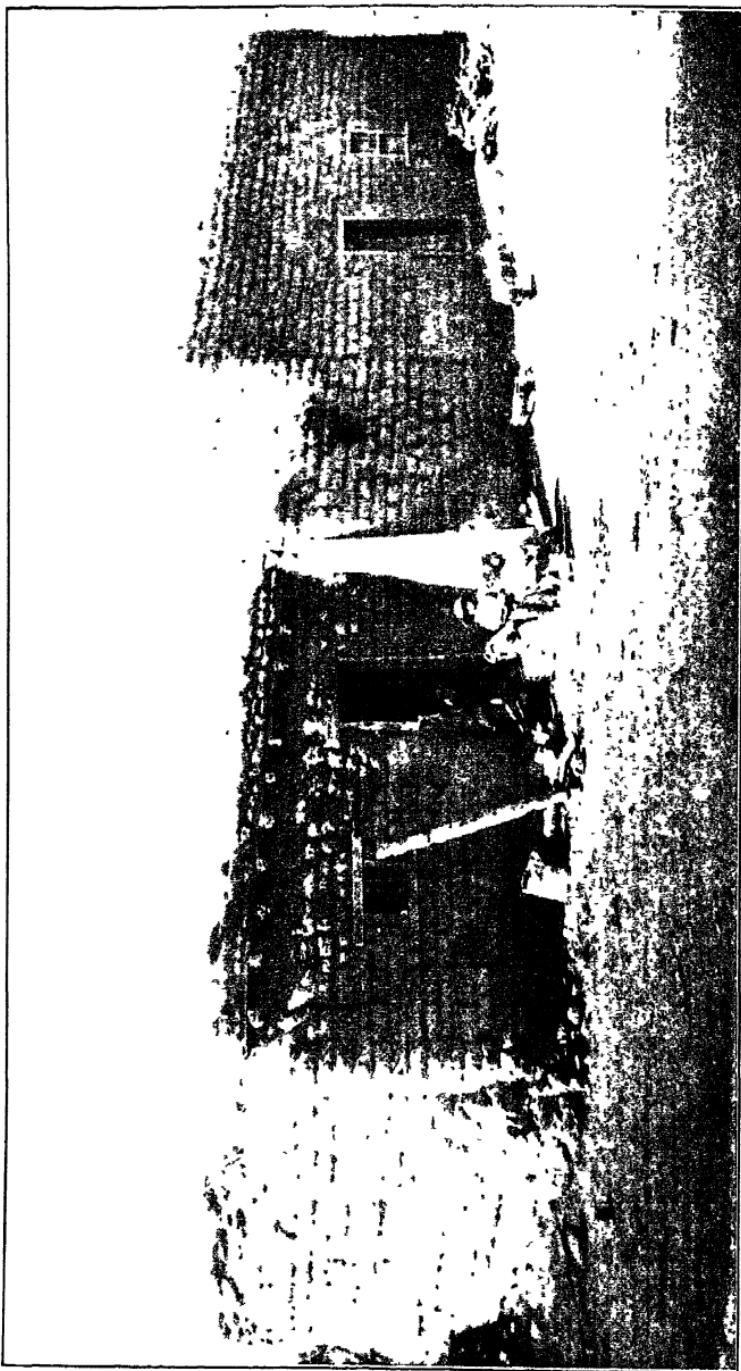
More than once as we rode over a ridge, and emerged suddenly from the timber into an open, grass-grown hollow, deer scampered away, their white tails showing for an instant before they disappeared into the timber. We had excellent opportunities to shoot them, but we could not have used the venison, had we killed them, and therefore let them go without interference.

On the third day out of Canelas we reached the junction of the Canelas and Topia trails, and now began to meet mule trains carrying supplies from Tepehuanes to the mines. Once we passed a long train on its way to the railroad, laden with bars of silver. In the distance we could hear, echoing through the forest, the "Ho-o-ah-ho-o" of the muleteers, as they shouted to the animals. In the evening we saw their camps, and sometimes passed them in the early morning before they were astir.

Finally we again entered a rough country, where we ascended steep trails to an altitude of nearly ten thousand feet, skirted and crossed canyons, and were treated to some scenery of exceptional grandeur. Here were towering cliffs of lime, glistening white in the sun.



Pack train laden with bars of silver



"Adobe huts took the place of log cabins"

The mountain cabins assumed a better character. Some of them were calked and snug, and the people were more civilized. One instance of this was the abandonment of the ancient stone, and the adoption of iron mills, similar to sausage mills, for grinding corn for tortillas. But even here the kerosene lamp has not yet supplanted the pine knot as a means of illumination.

We had crossed the divide, and the waters now flowed toward the Atlantic. For a day we maintained a high altitude, and were surrounded again by snow, but at last, one morning, began our eastern descent.

At twelve o'clock on December nine we came out upon a high bluff, and below us lay a fertile valley. The forest was behind us. As we dropped into the plain, fields of maguey and corn appeared everywhere about us. Adobe huts took the place of log cabins, and gardens of tuna cactus, cultivated for its fruit, lined the trail. One village of adobe that we rode through resembled from a distance the ruins of some ancient town. Within three hours the whole aspect of the country had changed. The trail was crowded with pack trains of merchandise, the people had assumed a more conventional air, and at last, when we forded a river and came upon a stage road, I knew that the railroad was near at hand,—and was not disappointed. Two more fordings of the river, then up a hill, and below us lay Tepehuanes, with its tall church spire, its adobe houses, and beyond the cosey American railroad station and lines of rails leading away to link it with the great world without.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A GLIMPSE OF THE EAST

NARROW, crooked streets, lined with adobe huts; Indians lounging in doorways; stray pigs and numberless dogs, foraging for refuse; a gray church spire; brown, barren hills rising beyond, a river winding at their base; the whole bathed in dazzling white sunlight with patches of ink-black shadows spread upon the ground — this was Tepehuanes as we rode into it that brilliant December afternoon.

In the central and more substantial part of the town we found the Hotel Internacional, and entered its wide doorway to dismount in the patio. Here an effusively polite landlord greeted us, and assigned to me a room — the best, he declared — in his most excellent establishment. The room had no windows, the stone walls were damp, and water oozed out of the earthen floor in one corner. A bed, however, with mattress and clean sheets upon it, promising a night of comfort, counterbalanced all defects.

In the little dining-room we were served with a very good dinner, and while we ate our host stood over us, smiling and rubbing his hands and talking. "Where did señor come from? Culiacan! Es possible! A long journey! Was there not much snow in the mountains? Yes? And it was very cold? Where is señor going? Mexico? A beautiful city! I have been there often. But señor will remain with us for

two days. The train is already leaving. *Mañana?* No, there is no train *mañana*. The señor will rest here until the day after, when there will be a train." This was all my slight smattering of Spanish permitted me to gather from our loquacious landlord's conversation, but it was enough to cut my dinner short, and hurry me down to the railroad; for I had no desire to remain two days in Tepehuanes.

Below the village is a stretch of sand, then the river, and on the opposite high bank the passenger station. No bridge spanned the stream, and no means of crossing the swiftly flowing water without a mount presented itself. But it made no matter. I reached there just in time to see the engine, with a string of freight cars and two passenger coaches, puffing up the grade; and, resigned to an enforced residence in Tepehuanes, returned at a more sober gait to the hotel.

Wilkinson and the mules were established at a *masson* in a by-street. Our saddle mules were quite worn out with their hard mountain climbing, but Maud, the irrepressible pack mule, in spite of her lame shoulder and one eye, was as bright and chipper to all outward appearances as the day we rode out of Culiacan. She had justified herself. Maud had shown that she was an old campaigner. Unlike the other animals, she was a good forager, and never lost a moment, when we halted for any purpose, to gather in whatever there was in sight to be eaten; and to her, everything green was included within that category. I often saw her, in dangerous descents, where the other mules could hardly find a footing, slide gayly down the rocks with the utmost unconcern, and grab at tempting boughs by the way.

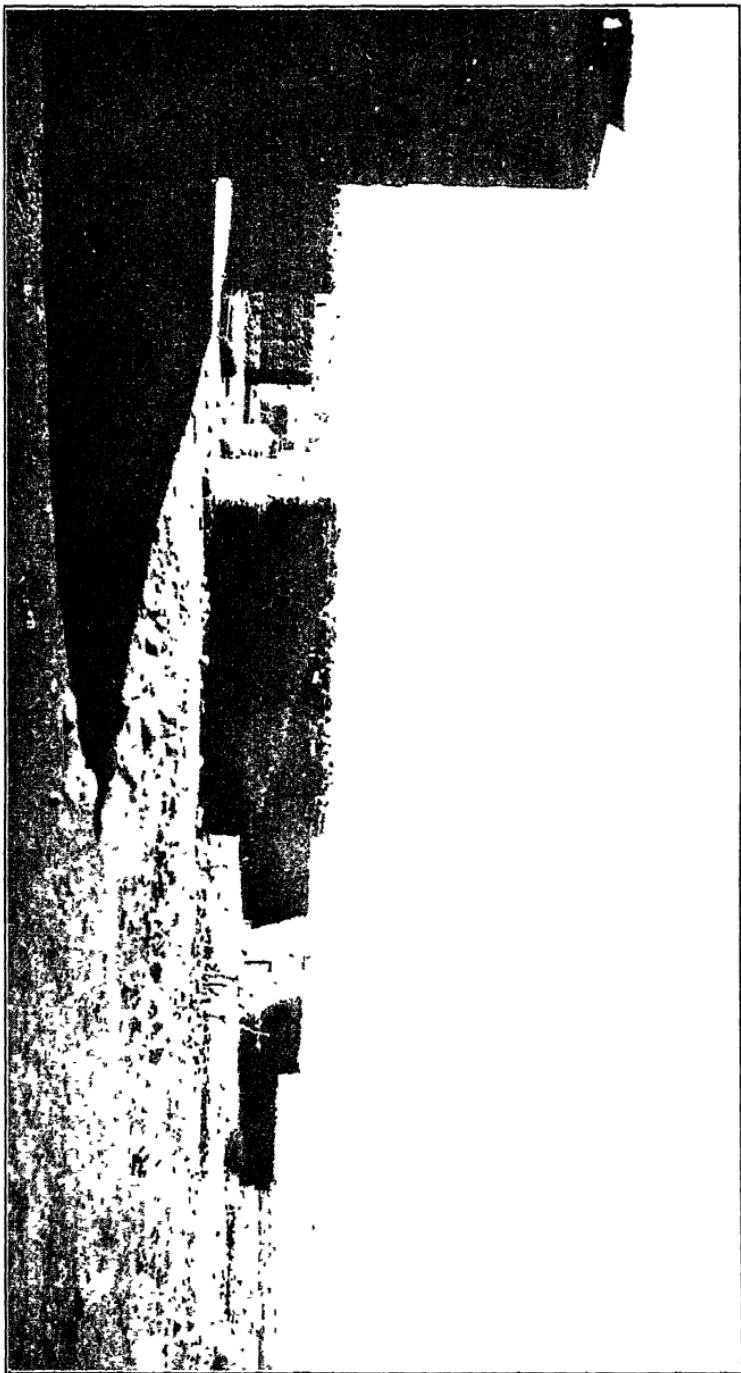
The morning sun had not yet driven away the hoar frost when I emerged, after a good night's rest, for a walk before breakfast, and to enjoy the snappy morning air. Tepehuanes lies in a river valley, at an altitude of sixty-five hundred feet above the sea. It has a delightful and picturesque situation. The valley through which the river courses is verdant and fruitful, the first rise of hills seared and red-brown, in marked contrast to the lower green, and above all, to the westward tower in grandeur the mighty mountains, their higher peaks at this time white with snow.

After breakfast I saddled Bucephalus and rode over to the railway station to verify the landlord's statement as to trains. It is a typical American station, and in contrast to the native buildings of Spanish design — those cold, cheerless, unsympathetic blocks of masonry — appealed to me as exceedingly cosey and homelike. This sense of coseyness was increased when I entered the little waiting-room and heard telegraph instruments in the adjoining office ticking off messages in English. I paused for a moment to listen to them before presenting myself at the ticket window.

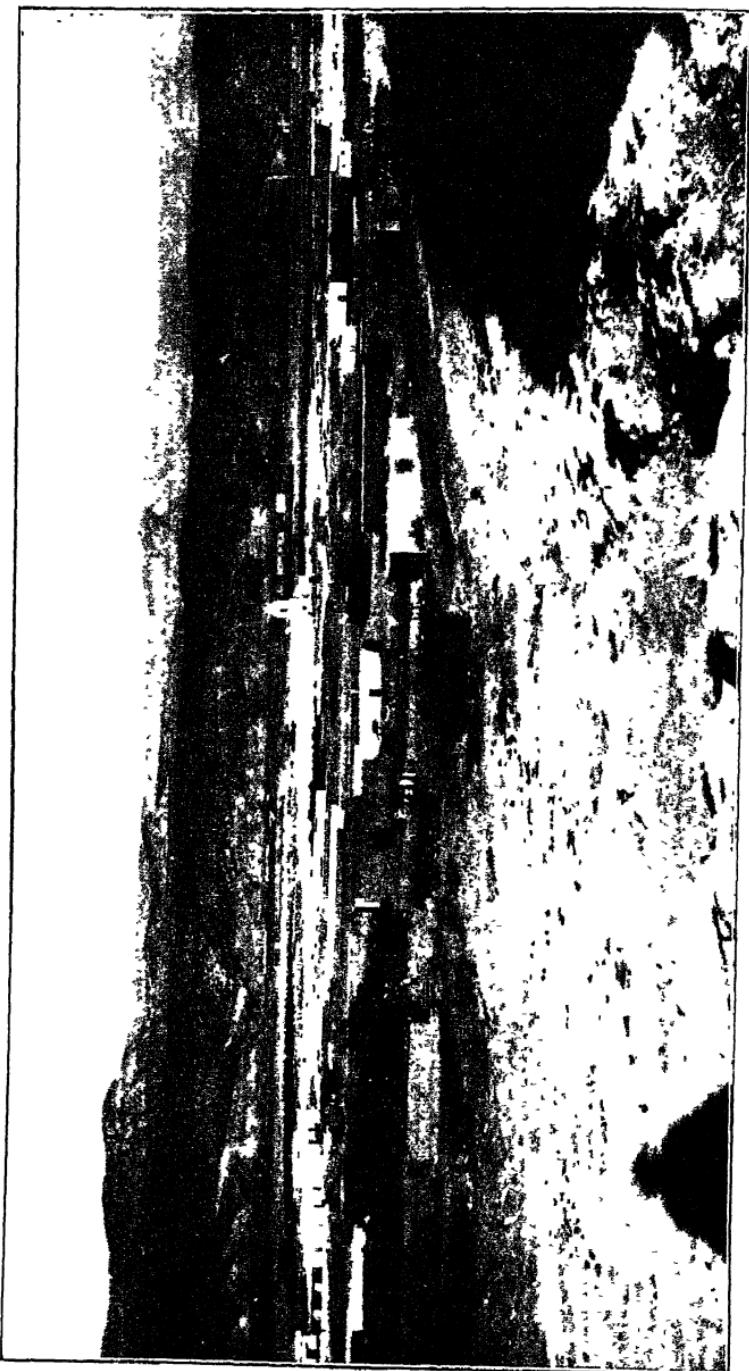
Sitting at his desk was the station agent, a pleasant-faced, middle-aged American.

"Good-morning, sir," I greeted. "When can I get a train to Durango? I wish to connect there for Monterey and Mexico City."

"Good-morning," said he, rising and coming to the window. "The next train will leave at five-thirty to-morrow evening, and will make a close connection for you at Durango the following day. Come into the office and I'll show you the time card. We've a fire."



Tepelhuane, bathed in brilliant December sunshine



A view of Tepelucanes

"Thank you," I accepted, explaining as I entered, "I'm an old telegraph operator and railroader, and I enjoy getting alongside the instruments."

"My name is Boon Barker," remarked he, extending his hand, "and it's a pleasure to meet a railroader from home."

I returned his hearty handshake and introducing myself explained: "My last railroading and telegraphing was on the Fitchburg, down in Massachusetts, and I quit there in 1889, so you see I've degenerated into an old-time plug."

"You're not Dillon Wallace of Labrador?" asked Barker.

"I've been to Labrador," I confessed.

"Well! well!" he exclaimed, again shaking my hand vigorously, "then we're old friends, for I've followed you in your travels."

This, and Barker's intense interest in Northern exploration, put us upon terms of good-fellowship at once. I learned that he had been a soldier of the regular army, and was a first sergeant under Lieutenant Lockwood at the time Lockwood volunteered for service on the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition. They were in Colorado at the time, running telegraph lines, and Barker was Lockwood's operator, sharing a tent with him.

I had the pleasure of an introduction to Mrs. Barker and their three charming children, and my afternoon with the family is one of the very pleasant recollections of my journey. The oldest child, a boy of seven, rides with his father into the high mountains, and is already an accomplished horseman, always eager for the sport of a hunting or camping trip. When the

little girl learned that I was going to a place where there was a great deal of candy of all kinds, she climbed upon my knee and told me, in the strictest confidence, what varieties and flavors she liked best.

It was half-past five, and already twilight, the following evening when the train pulled out of Tepehuanes, and I found myself at last comfortably settled with a cigar in a corner of the first-class coach, on my way to Mexico City.

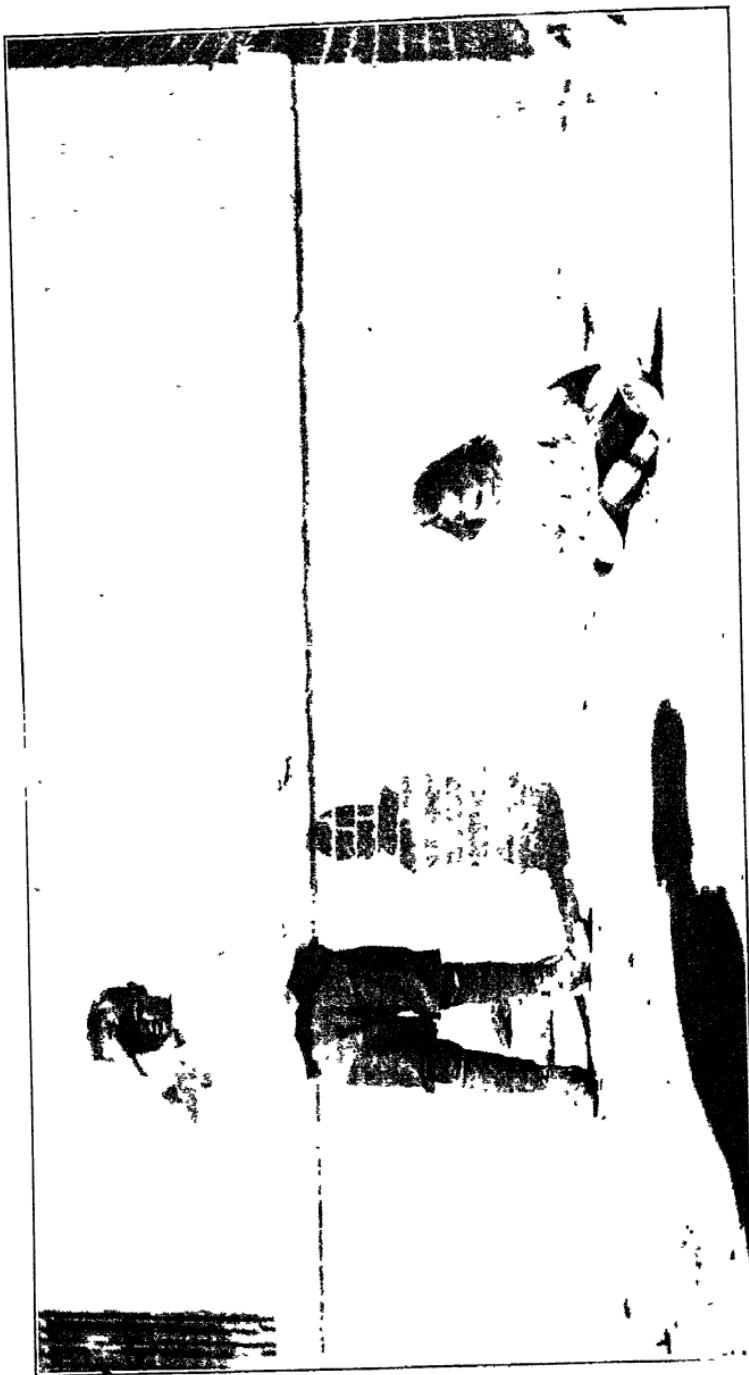
Two Americans and a young English engineer, who had ridden over from a mine near Topia, and had barely caught the train, occupied the seats opposite. One of the Americans, a New Yorker, and evidently a promoter, was chief of the trio. He seemed bent upon impressing his own opinion of his importance upon his companions and me, the only other white passengers on the train,—an opinion, I am free to say, I at least did not accept at its owner's appraisal. He talked in a loud voice about his journey, "New Yawk," and the possible status of the stock "maket." Some Mexican "lawr" (meaning law) did not suit him, and he was quite dissatisfied with the "earl" (meaning oil) lamps in the car. In the hope that I might learn something of the effect of the financial panic in the United States, then at its height, upon mining operations in Mexico, I attempted conversation, but my friend was so patronizing that I soon slunk humbly back into my corner. I had an intuition, however, that such information as might have been gleaned from him would not have been of significant value.

It is unfortunate, but true, that one meets a great many of this class of our countrymen in Mexico, and

The author and the youngest child of Mr. Boon Barker, at Tepehuanes station



The lad who could ride and the lass who liked candy



more than often has occasion to blush for them. They brag inconsiderately and consistently, and always endeavor to show what very important individuals they themselves are, never forgetting to find fault with everything not American — unless it will militate against their personal interests. Of course one knows that they are by no means representative, and are in fact usually very small ducks in the little puddle in which they swim at home; but at the same time they are Americans, and one is compelled to own them as fellow-citizens, which is sometimes exceedingly embarrassing.

There is another class of Americans who have lived in Mexico for a great many years, some of them because they do not find it healthful at home and are not in cordial accord with prosecuting attorneys and police authorities north of the Rio Grande; and others who have investments, or whose business relations keep them there. These are constantly comparing Mexico and Mexicans with the United States and Americans, to the disadvantage of the latter, and endeavor to impress all visitors with their own expressed belief that everything and everybody south of the international boundary is vastly superior to everything north of it. They will never admit that Mexico or her people are not the ideal of perfection in every respect; and to suggest to them that there is much room for improvement there is to insult them. Of course these people are expatriates, and not to be taken seriously.

There are no Pullman cars on the Tepehuanes branch, and therefore no sleeping accommodations upon the train, which, after a two and a half hours'

run, lies up for the night at Santiago Papasquiaro. Here passengers seek such lodgings as they can find in the town, a mile distant from the station. I was calculating upon the probability of being able to bribe the baggageman to permit me to bunk in his car, rather than risk the uncertainty of such accommodations as might be secured in a primitive and over-crowded hotel, when the train conductor entered and took a seat beside me.

"You might not find very pleasant quarters in Santiago Papasquiaro," said he, "and I'd be very glad if you'd be my guest for the night. We railroad men have a shack for a dining-place, and a pretty good cook, and I have an extra room in a native house near the station that's at your service."

Of course I accepted, and thanked him most heartily for his thoughtfulness and hospitality to a stranger. Our acquaintance had begun scarcely an hour before, in an introduction by Barker. This conductor was W. B. Goodspeed, an American who has been in the employ of the International and National Lines of Mexico for upwards of twenty years. His treatment of me was characteristic of what a traveller in the Republic may expect at the hands of railway employees. All of the American officials of the Mexican railroads, with whom I came in contact, were most courteous and accommodating. Through Mr. Goodspeed's kindly hospitality, I enjoyed not only a comfortable bed in Santiago Papasquiaro, but the best meals I had eaten since leaving Culiacan.

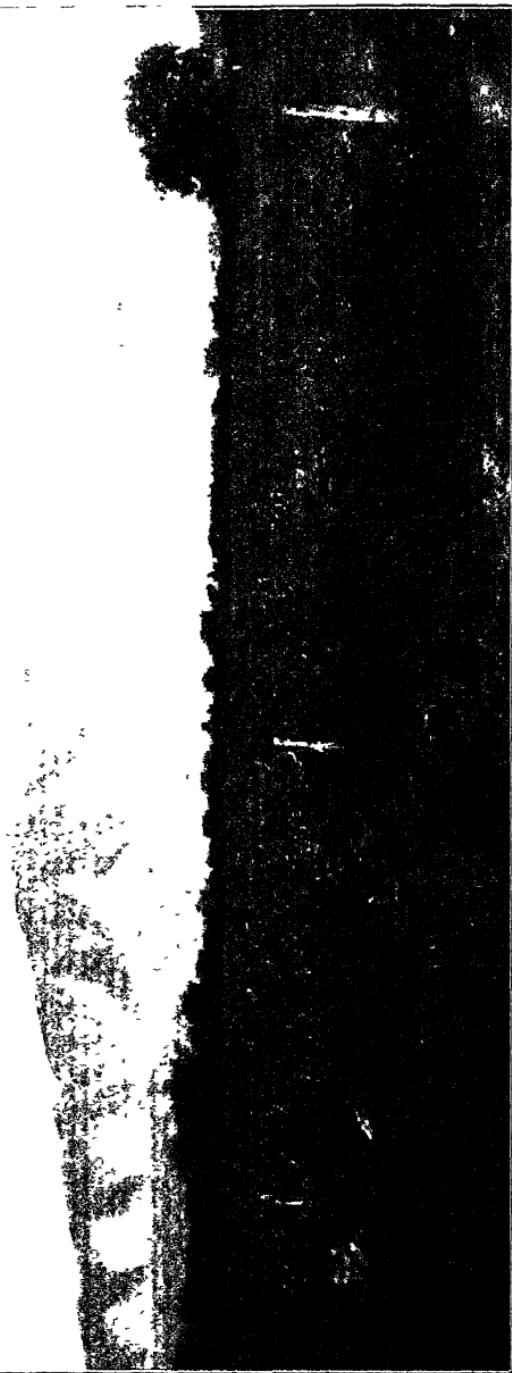
For a considerable distance beyond Santiago Papasquiaro the country is rough and mountainous, the hills and rocks sometimes assuming peculiar and fan-

Photograph by Charles N. Remington

Irrigated gardens



The valley in which Monterey lies



tastic shapes. At one point a tall shaft, carved by nature out of the living rock, surmounts a dome-shaped crest, like an obelisk erected to some forgotten monarch.

Finally the landscape changes, and the train passes into a flat, uninteresting district, devoted chiefly to cattle-raising, though great stretches of it are so barren that cattle would find it difficult indeed to pick a living. The soil of these barren stretches is sand or adobe, there is insufficient water for irrigation, and therefore it is of small agricultural value. Much of it, however, is mineralized, and numerous cones of masonry, scattered over the plain, mark abandoned shafts of worked-out mines.

Now and again our train stopped at villages, and the greater part of the population of each was gathered at the station to witness our arrival. Whenever a passenger boarded or left the train, there was always an army of friends to bid farewell or extend a welcome to the traveller.

The city of Durango, with a population of forty-five thousand, lies at an altitude of sixty-two hundred feet above the sea. At this season the nights are frosty, and when I arrived a high wind was blowing, and the air was filled with sand and dust. This is the centre of a rich mining district, and the traveller is certain to have pointed out to him the wonderful mountain of iron, and to hear marvellous tales of fabulous wealth of gold and silver yielded up to the miner by the surrounding hills. On my outward journey I did not stop, but tarried for a day upon my return. Now the train for Monterey was waiting, and I immediately transferred to the Pullman sleeper,

to revel in its luxury, and enjoy a good juicy American steak served by a polite American negro porter.

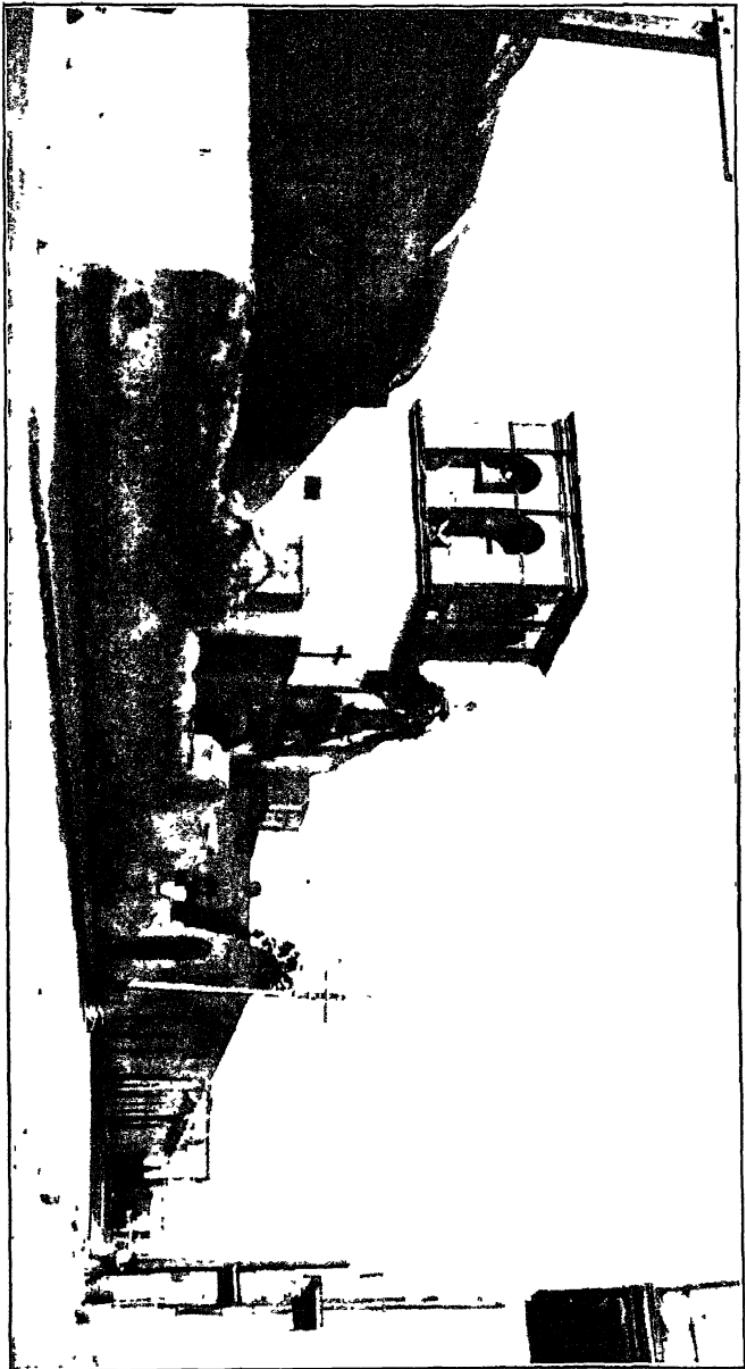
Monterey is a popular tourist resort, and is pretty thoroughly conventionalized. The city has, however, some interesting side streets and corners, typically Mexican, and a few relics of earlier days, which have not been crowded out by the new civilization. Notable among the latter is the old church of San Francisco, originally built in 1560 and rebuilt in 1730. Adjoining it is a convent, which, authorities say, is the original convent built in connection with the church in 1560.

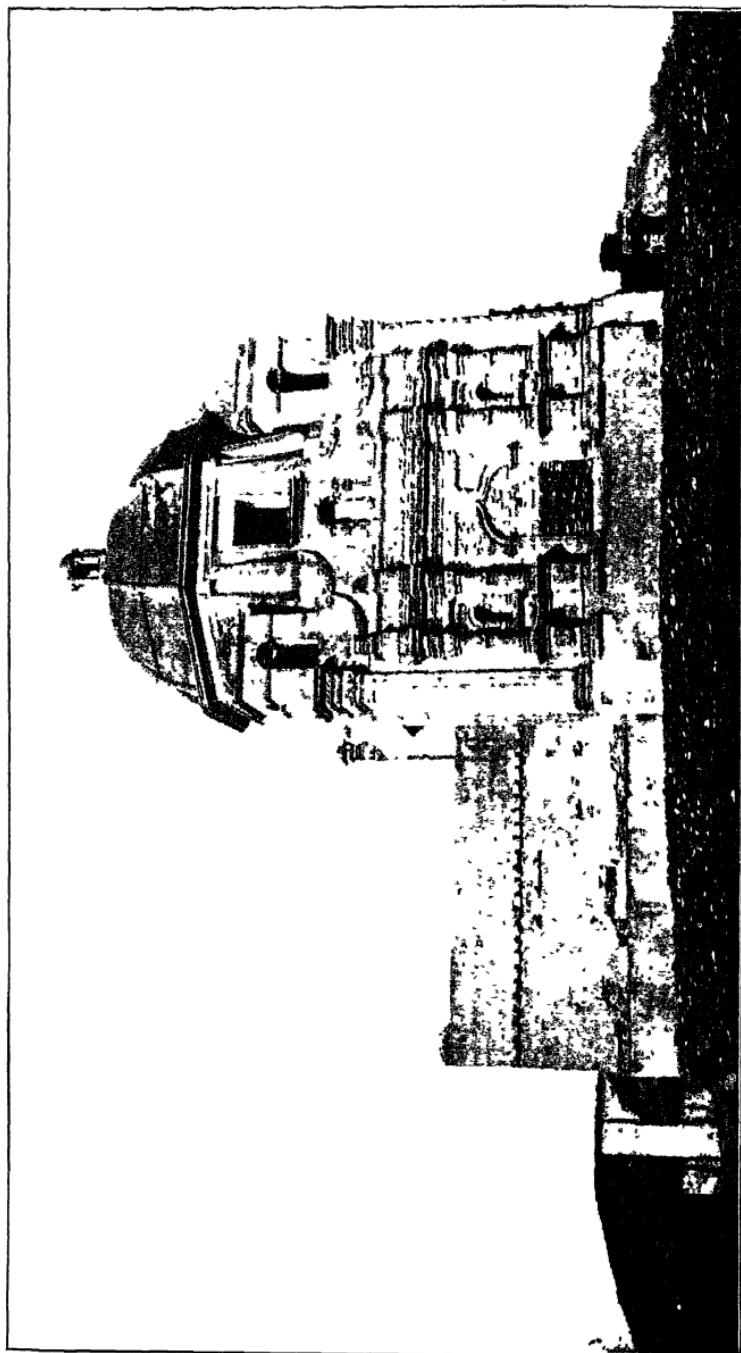
By far the most interesting point to Americans round about Monterey is the Bishop's Palace, on the Chepe Vera Hill. It was built by Bishop Verger in 1782. Its special interest lies in the fact that it was the centre of the battle of Monterey, and on September 22, 1846, was captured by General Taylor after a stout defence.

I engaged a carriage and drove out to the battle-ground in the afternoon. The Chepe Vera Hill is a barren eminence. Near its top I was able to trace some of the breastworks used by the Mexicans during the battle. The Bishop's Palace on the crest is now occupied only by two soldiers, detailed to protect it from the ravages of souvenir-hunting tourists. This is an actual necessity. Tourist vandals were making such havoc upon the building that for a time the authorities were forced to close it and exclude all visitors. Now, upon certain conditions, one may be permitted to enter.

To the eastward of the Chepe Vera Hill Monterey nestles in a valley amid picturesque surroundings. A haze of smoke hovered over the valley, and par-

The old church of San Francisco, Monterey





The Bishop's Palace, Monterey

tially veiled from view the city and the two most notable mountains, Cerro de la Sila, or Saddle Mountain, and Cerro de las Mitras, or Mountain of Mitres. Topo Chico Hill lies to the westward, and at its base are the famous Topo Chico mineral springs, to which Montezuma's daughter is said to have come to be cured of a malady by the wonderful medicinal properties of the waters.

Monterey has a population of seventy-five thousand, and is the second city in importance in the Republic. Considerable American capital is invested here in manufacturing industries. The American colony numbers upwards of five thousand. The chief need of the city at present is a good hotel, and business men, I was informed, stand ready to pay half the expense of erecting one. The main obstacle is the difficulty of securing a suitable site, through high and inflated values placed upon land. Since my visit Monterey has experienced a terrible disaster. In August, 1909, the city was flooded by unusually heavy rains, more than two thousand people were drowned, and a quarter of the city destroyed.

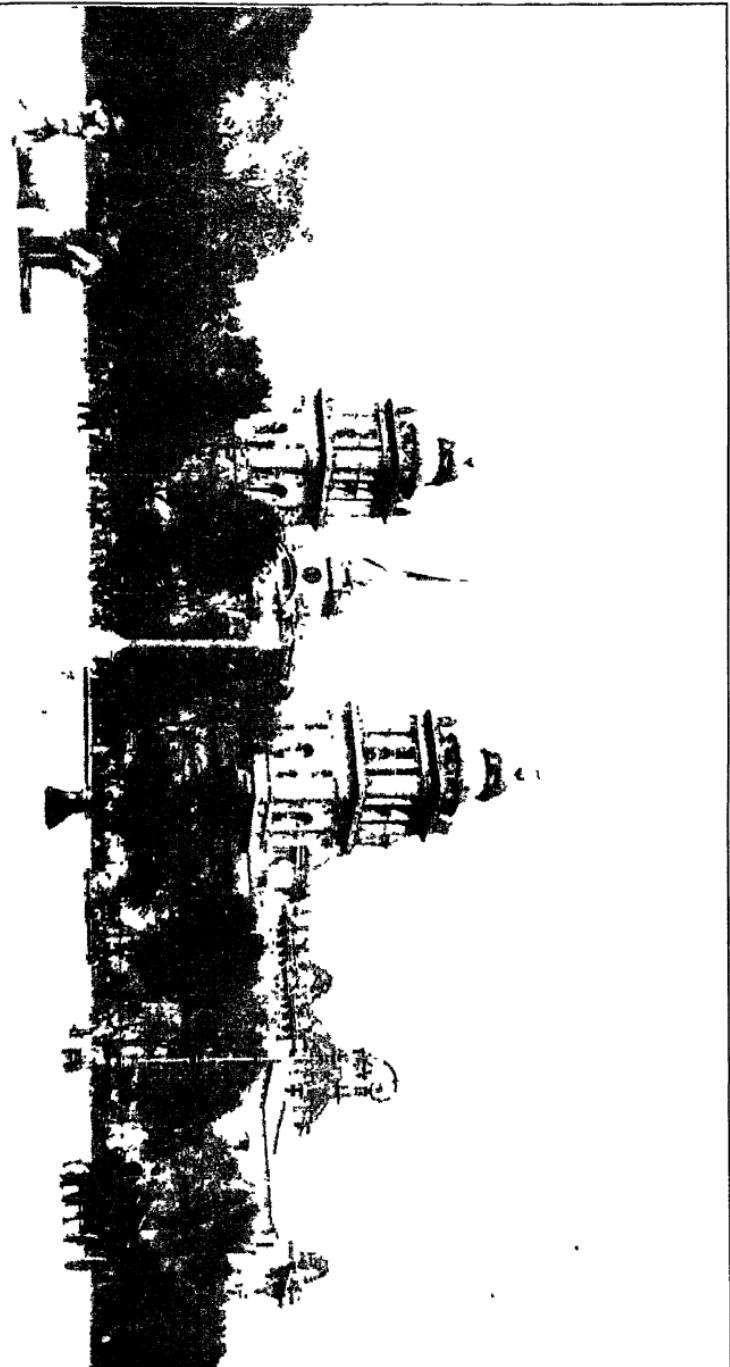
It was Sunday morning when I reached Mexico City, where I engaged quarters in a hotel on the famous Calle de San Francisco, not far from the centre of the business section.

I spent the day in the Plaza Mayor, or Zocalo, as it is sometimes called, recounting to myself the remarkable history of this bit of ground, and trying to picture it as it appeared in the days of Montezuma. The Zocalo was the centre of the Aztec capitol. On its east, where the National Palace now stands, was Montezuma's palace, and later the palace of the

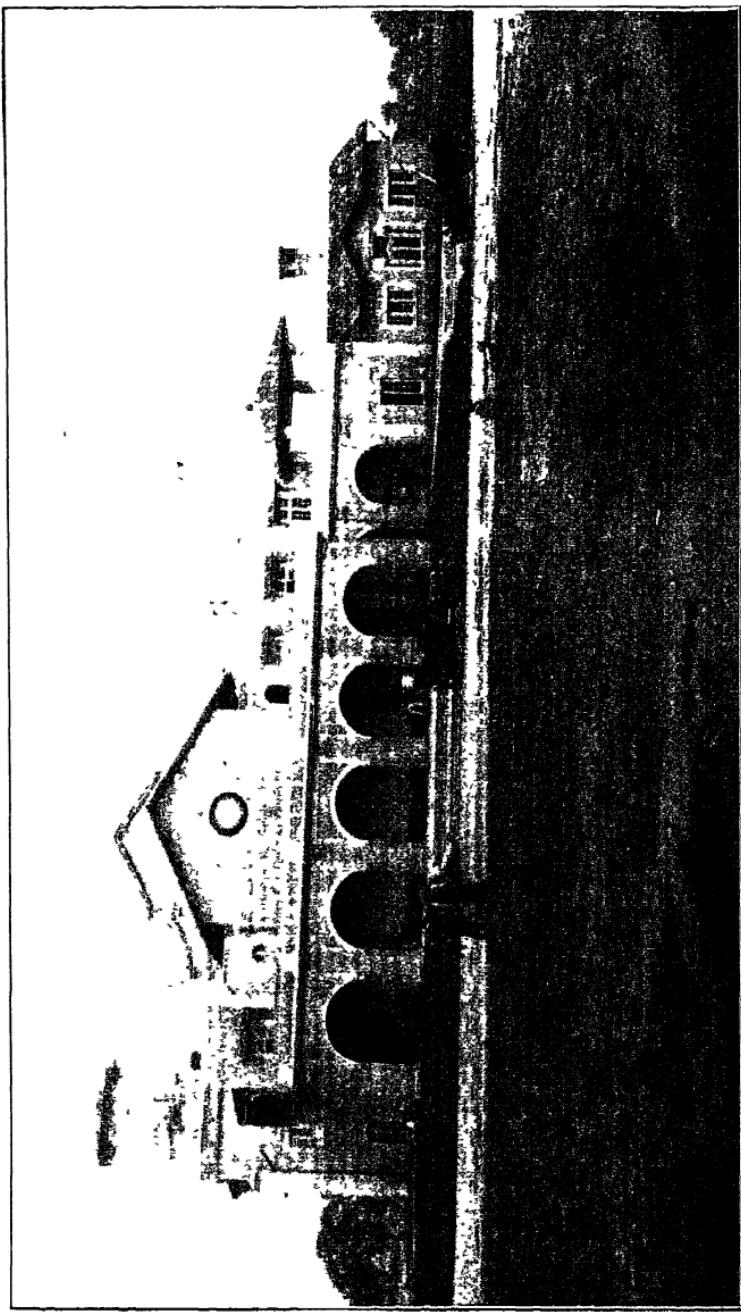
Viceroy; on the north, the cathedral rises upon the very foundations of the great *teacali*, the Aztec temple, where untold thousands were annually offered in sacrifice to the terrible Huitzilopotchli. This, too, was the scene of those battles between the conquerors and the vanquished that finally decided the fate of Anahuac.

The cathedral is said to be the finest in the Western Hemisphere. Certainly it is an imposing and beautiful structure, with its two majestic towers and splendid façade. The building is three hundred and eighty-seven feet in length by one hundred and seventy-seven in width. Within are two rows of Doric pillars, and a high and imposing dome. Both sides of the interior are lined with chapels dedicated to saints. The altar rails and trimmings, it is claimed, are of solid silver and gold, but the incredulous say that the precious metals were long since removed and plated counterparts substituted. The walls of the sacristy are covered with paintings, which to me were not particularly interesting; and at one end of the choir is what is said to be a genuine Murillo Madonna.

I returned early to the hotel, and sat the evening out at a lobby window watching an endless parade of handsome equipages in which the flower of the city were on exhibition. This parade is a regular Sunday evening institution, peculiar to Mexico City. The carriages pass through the Calle de San Francisco to the Zocalo, around to the Alameda, and thence back to the Calle de San Francisco, making the circle again and again. There were many beautiful women on exhibition, but most of them were too profuse in the application of face powder. This is the fashion, how-



The Cathedral, Mexico City



American Country Club, Mexico City

ever, all over Mexico. If a woman is handsome, or thinks she is, she almost invariably spoils her good looks in an attempt to improve upon nature by making her face ghastly with powder.

I had a letter of introduction to Dr. A. R. Goodman, Surgeon General of the National Railway Lines, and when I presented myself on Monday morning the Doctor received me with the greatest cordiality, and devoted several hours to showing me the city. In his automobile we traversed the historic causeway over which Cortez made his desperate retreat; we passed the place where Alvarado made his famous leap; the Tree of *La Noche Triste*, under which, so the legend say, Cortez wept on that dismal night. This tree, sprouted a thousand years ago, spread its shade as it does to-day far back in that prehistoric period when Tenochtitlan was young. The top of the tree is broken and decayed, and an iron fence has been built around it to keep it safe from souvenir-hunting tourists.

We visited Chapultepec (the Hill of the Grasshopper), where the Aztec rulers had their summer home, tradition says. The present palace, built by Spanish Viceroys, is the suburban residence of President Diaz. What tales the giant *ahuehuelt*s, which stand below, might tell, if they could only speak! They thrived in this very soil before the world knew there was a Western Hemisphere. They witnessed the progress and destruction of a semi-civilization of which we to-day know all but nothing. Generations of men have been born, have acted their part upon the stage of life, and are gone and forgotten; kingdoms, republics, and empires have risen and fallen; wars upon

wars have swept the land; one race of man has supplanted another; and these trees have stood through it all, and still live on, indefinitely on, defiant of Time, silent witnesses of human frailty.

Not far away is the Molino del Rey, where the battle of September 28, 1847, was fought. This is, of course, of special interest to the American visitor. One may see the old mill from Chapultepec.

But every nook and corner of Mexico and the surrounding country has its bit of history and romance, and a single chapter would not suffice for even the barest mention of the most important. We must forego so much as a reference to them, for Mexico City is not beyond the Sierras, and should have no part in a narrative of a journey through the western country. Unconsciously my pen has led me into this digression.

One pleasant incident, however, I cannot pass. In the old days when I was reasonably content to sit at a desk in a New York office and scan the horizon for clients, and spend an evening at the club, I had a friend. This friend was Warren H. Fiske, a rising young electrical engineer. I had lost touch with him for several years until one evening, a year or so before my visit to Mexico, I met him unexpectedly in Toronto, Canada, and learned that he was living and practising his profession there. What was my surprise, then, when he honked up to my hotel in his auto car two or three days after my arrival, and pulled me into it and whisked me away to his home, and I learned that he was the Superintendent of Motive Power of the Mexico City street railway system, busily engaged in installing new power houses and equipment. It was a jolly

meeting, as such unexpected meetings are sure to be. He took possession of me during the remaining days of my stay, and whirled me in his car all over the city and through the chief suburbs.

One of these suburbs I cannot leave without a word — Coyoacan. I could have spent hours in wandering about this old town, breathing its atmosphere of romance. Here stands the house in which Cortez lived with La Marina while Mexico City was being rebuilt. An iron railing on the opposite side of the street blocks a secret underground entrance to the house. Near by is another house which he occupied for a time, and in its enclosed yard is the well in which he is said to have drowned his wife. Not far away is the church, and between the house and the church is a cairn of stone surmounted by a cross erected by the conqueror over the grave of the wife he murdered.

Finally, and much too soon, the day of my departure for Tepehuanes and the Pacific arrived, Fiske saw me to the train, and with regret I said *adios* to him and to the historic and fascinating Capital.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE CANYON TRAIL

ON the evening of December twenty-third my train drew into Tepehuanes. Wilkinson met me at the railway station, and I instructed him to have the mules saddled and ready for a prompt start upon our return journey the following morning, for already I was overdue in Mazatlan.

Mr. and Mrs. Barker urged that I remain with them until after the holiday. The little ones and all were filled with the spirit of Christmas. Florence and Howard, the two older children, told me of the many things they expected Santa Claus to bring them. A big bronze turkey from the mountains, a barrel of luscious red-cheeked American apples, and innumerable other good things held forth the promise of a day of feasting and pleasure, and in the face of all this it was indeed a hardship to decline. I accepted, however, a cordial invitation to spend the night with my friends, rather than in the cheerless hotel.

The next morning everything was white with frost, the ground frozen, pools of water covered with a scum of ice, the sky clear, the air snappy, and the day perfect for travelling. In spite of my injunction to be ready at an early hour, it was past ten o'clock when Wilkinson appeared with the mules. He was never ambitious to leave the larger towns in which we stopped. I have reason to believe him a gay Lothario,

with a sweetheart in every place he visited; or at any rate a very susceptible fellow, and at the same time a very fickle one. He was always loath to part from the charmer of the moment, but under the glances of a new pair of flashing black eyes he quickly forgot the old, and melted as readily as a piece of butter in the summer sun,—and sparkling black eyes were plenty in every village by the way.

When we finally rode out of Tepehuanes my saddle bags were well filled with red-cheeked apples and a loaf of Mrs. Barker's good bread, the latter a real luxury in this land of tortillas. An hour's brisk travelling carried us out of the valley and found us winding up the trail into the peaks, and before night fell we were surrounded by patches of snow, and passing sheltered banks crystallised with ice that even the mid-day warmth did not effect.

What glorious nights these were! Nature was in a better mood than when we made our outward trip. Not a cloud flecked the sky; the stars, from a bed of azure, just above our heads, gazed down upon us with wide-open eyes. We were very close to heaven indeed, here in these mountain heights.

Christmas Day was one of superb loveliness. The deep blue sky was still studded with stars as we ate a meagre breakfast in the open, and before the sun had tipped the sea of surrounding snow-capped peaks with silver, and while the canyons and ravines were still dark, we swung into the saddle to enjoy as we rode the radiant morning, the pine-scented forest, and the great, marvellous, gorgeous world that lay about us.

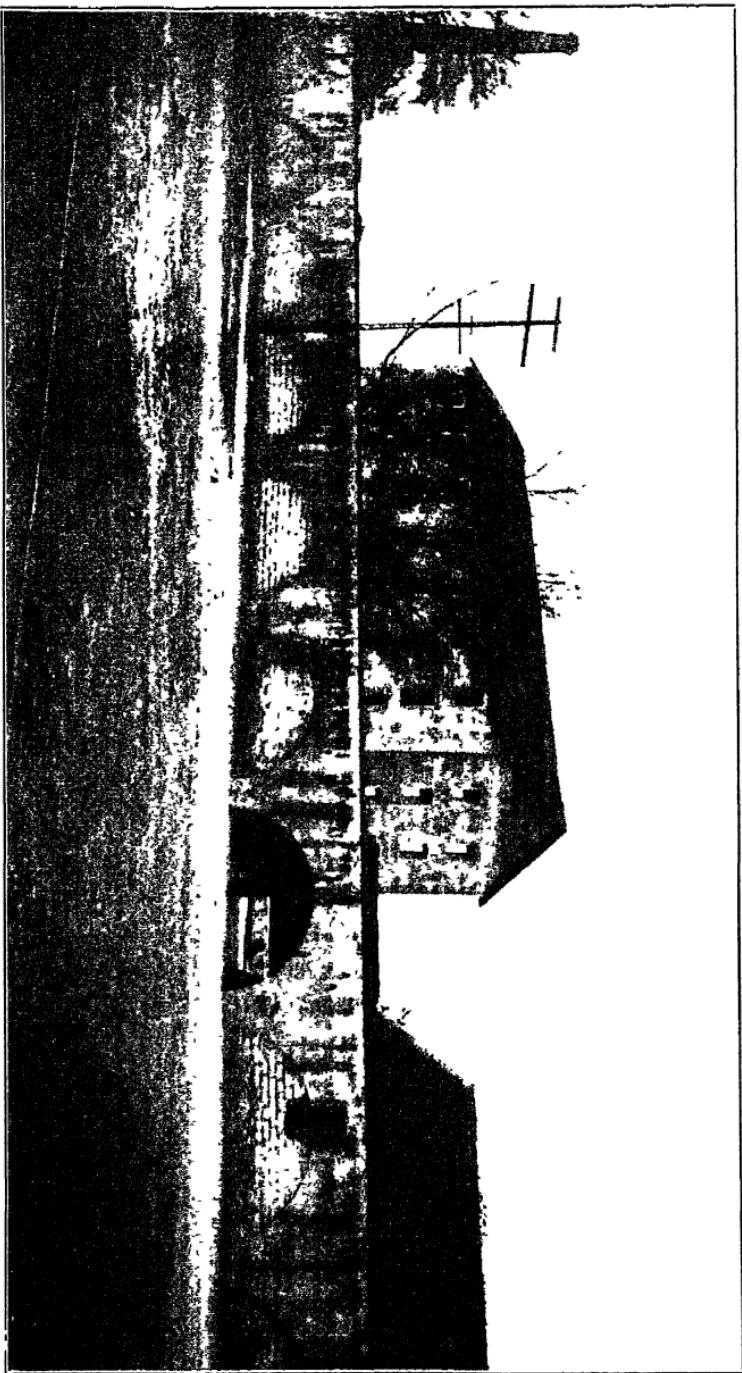
No halt was made during the day, save to recinch the saddles. A few apples sufficed for luncheon while

we rode, and it was finally long past dark, after eleven continuous hours on the trail, when we dismounted at a cabin, ready to enjoy to the utmost a Christmas dinner of tortillas, very hot chille con carne, and strong black coffee; and I was weary enough to roll into my blanket upon the ground, after a solacing pipe, and sink at once into slumber.

It had been my intention to return by way of Topia, a small mining village lying to the north of Canelas, strike the river trail a few miles below Canelas, follow the canyons westward, and thus proceed to Culiacan. But it was imperative that I be in Mazatlan as early in January as possible, and therefore, when we reached the branching of the Canelas and Topia trails, and I learned that Wilkinson was by no means certain that he was sufficiently familiar with the trail to Topia to guide me there directly and without delay, I decided to retrace our old route to Canelas, drop into the river trail at that point, and take no chances upon being lost.

At noon on December twenty-seventh we again rode into Canelas. Wilkinson urged that we remain here for the night, assuring me that it would require the whole afternoon to replace a shoe that one of the mules had cast. I felt confident, however, that the mule was not the object of Wilkinson's consideration, and gave him until two o'clock to shoe the animal and get his dinner, a feat that he accomplished, but reluctantly. The truth was, I had some misgivings as to the reception my late patients might give me should I meet any of them. The fellow with the toothache, however, did discover me as we were mounting to ride away, and to my great astonishment showered blessings upon

Molino del Rey, captured by American troops during Mexican War





*The Tree of the Dismal Night, under which it
is said Cortez wept*

my head. By some freak of nature the tooth had ceased paining him shortly after my "treatment," the swelling had left his face, and with him, at least, I had won a deathless reputation as a great *medico*.

At Canelas the trail drops down, rather suddenly, several hundred feet into a deep box canyon, and thence follows the bed of a river which flows to the westward between the canyon walls. Only at infrequent intervals was it possible to travel at a pace faster than a walk. Great bowlders, washed bare by the turbulent stream during the freshet season, were strewn thickly from wall to wall of the narrow canyon; and the river, in its crooked course, now swung to one wall, now to the other, necessitating frequent fordings. They say that there are three hundred and sixty of these fordings to be made, and I can readily believe it. Because of the recent storms and melting snow above, the water was unusually high for the season, and so deep in places that the mules could scarcely keep their footing, and we were constantly wet to the knees.

Here and there nature has scooped out nooks, and left small level plots of alluvial deposit above high-water mark. Wherever these nooks occur one is pretty sure to find primitive little thatched Indian huts of bamboo, surrounded by gardens of banana and orange trees. Razorback hogs root about the huts, and scrawny long-horn cattle, belonging to the dwellers, pick a living wherever they can find it.

These canyon Indians are extremely polite, never failing to touch their sombreros with a cheery "*Buenos días, señor*," or "*Buenos tardes, señor*," when one meets them. To the traveller from Durango and the east this courteous bearing toward the stranger is par-

ticularly noticeable, in pleasing contrast to the more sullen folk of the higher mountains.

It was our custom, while in the canyon, to halt at night at one of these Indian huts, where we were always sure of a cordial welcome, and of being permitted to spread our bed under a thatched shed, a protection which was appreciated; for though the days during this period of our journey were clear and perfect, showers fell during the night.

These are charming spots. The air is charged with the perfume of wild flowers, the river below sings a soothing song, the massive canyon walls meet the deep blue heavens a mile above one's head, and the atmosphere is soft and balmy. The scenery compares with that of the Royal Gorge, in Colorado, and reminds one of it strongly, though the climatic conditions and flora are sub-tropical and offer an increasing charm.

Well down the canyon a ruined flume of masonry was passed. It must have been nearly two miles in length, and was intended to carry water to an extensive mining mill below, also abandoned and going to decay.

We had been in the canyon two days when our trail left the main river to ascend a smaller stream, and presently, at an altitude of seventeen hundred feet, burst out into a gently rolling country. Here flowers and fruits lined the well-beaten road, and the balmy air was laden with summer fragrance. This sudden transition from rugged, snow-capped mountains and high-walled canyon into a wide and verdant sub-tropical land is by no means one of the least pleasing features of Mexican travel. It is an example of the contrast of physical and climatic conditions so characteristic of the country.

The following day we rode through a half-ruined village of the Spanish period — the first settlement of importance since leaving Canelas,— and at half-past four in the afternoon dismounted at the Hotel Cosmopolita in Culiacan.

The little city was all agog with preparations for a great New Year's Eve ball, to be given in celebration of the coming of the Southern Pacific Railroad extension, which was to open Culiacan to the north during the New Year. This ball was an invitation affair, upon which, proud citizens informed me, more than six thousand dollars had been spent, and was under the patronage of the Governor. I was honored with an invitation, but had no proper clothing with me, and, besides, was to be up bright and early on New Year's Day to catch the tri-weekly train for Altata, and therefore declined.

The faithful Wilkinson came gratuitously to assist me in getting my baggage packed, and to act as a self-elected body servant until the very hour of my departure from Culiacan. I believe he was genuinely sorry to see me go, as I certainly was to part from him, for our companionship on the trail had been pleasant.

It was mid-afternoon on January first when our slow-moving train, which had consumed six hours in making the run of forty-seven miles, coughing and heaving like a decrepit old horse, came to a stop at the Altata station.

At Culiacan I had been informed that I should doubtless connect, on the evening of my arrival in Altata, with the *Luella*, one of a line of little Mexican steamers plying between Gulf of California ports, southward bound to Mazatlan. Here, however, I

learned that the *Luella* was not due until the following day, and reluctantly I took up my quarters at the principal "hotel," a thatched-roof shack overrun with big fat fleas, though serving fairly good meals — much better than one might expect in such an establishment.

During the evening I sauntered up the main street to buy some cigars. The town was filled with natives from the surrounding country, celebrating the holiday. In front of the dimly-lighted mescal shops were groups of quarrelsome men who had already partaken too freely of liquor, and I was quite satisfied to return to the hotel for a quiet smoke. It was dark when I crossed the deserted plaza, a barren, unlighted stretch of sand. I had not gone a dozen yards when some one at my elbow startled me with the remark:

"Good-evening, sir. It is not safe for you to walk here alone after dark, and I will go to the hotel with you."

Until I heard the voice I was not aware that any one was near me. The man spoke in broken English. In the dim light I could not make out his features, but could see that he was somewhat under average height, dressed like an American, and wearing a cap instead of the usual sombrero of the peon. The cap alone was sufficient proof that he was not a Mexican, though his accent was Spanish.

"Good-evening," I answered. "Why do you say I am not safe alone?"

"I've been listening to those half-drunken Mexicans. They have been talking about you, and saying, 'That is an American, and he has much money, like all Americans.' Some of these men are bad men, and

Cairn surmounted by cross erected by Cortez in memory of wife he drowned



A view of Mazatlan harbor.



they are full of mescal, and they'd stick you with a knife for a peso. You must not walk here after dark, sir."

"But I have a gun," I assured him.

"No matter. The knife would be in your back before you could use your gun. They could hide in this sand and steal on you like a cat before you saw them. There may be men lying along this path now waiting for you, but they won't attack two of us."

We walked to the hotel together. There I offered him a cigar, and we sat and chatted for an hour while we smoked, and I drew from him his history.

His name was Francisco, a Spaniard from Barcelona. He was drafted into the Spanish navy two or three years before the Spanish-American War, and served as a machinist until one day his vessel entered an American port, and he took advantage of an opportunity to desert. This he felt he had a moral right to do, as he had been forced into the service against his will, and had received harsh treatment there.

He worked as a machinist in Boston until the outbreak of the war, when he secured a berth on one of our transports, which he held until peace was declared. His life wanderings had carried him to the West Indies, South America, the Far East, and Alaska. He had visited nearly all of our principal cities, remembering and describing accurately the chief streets and attractions of many of them, from Boston to San Francisco.

He had been employed as engineer in mines in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and California. The last mine in which he worked had suspended operations some weeks before our meeting,

and he had walked the hundreds of miles from Los Angeles to Altata, by way of Guaymas, in search of employment, and was now *en route* to the new railroad construction camps at Mazatlan, hoping to find work there.

"How are you off for money?" I asked.

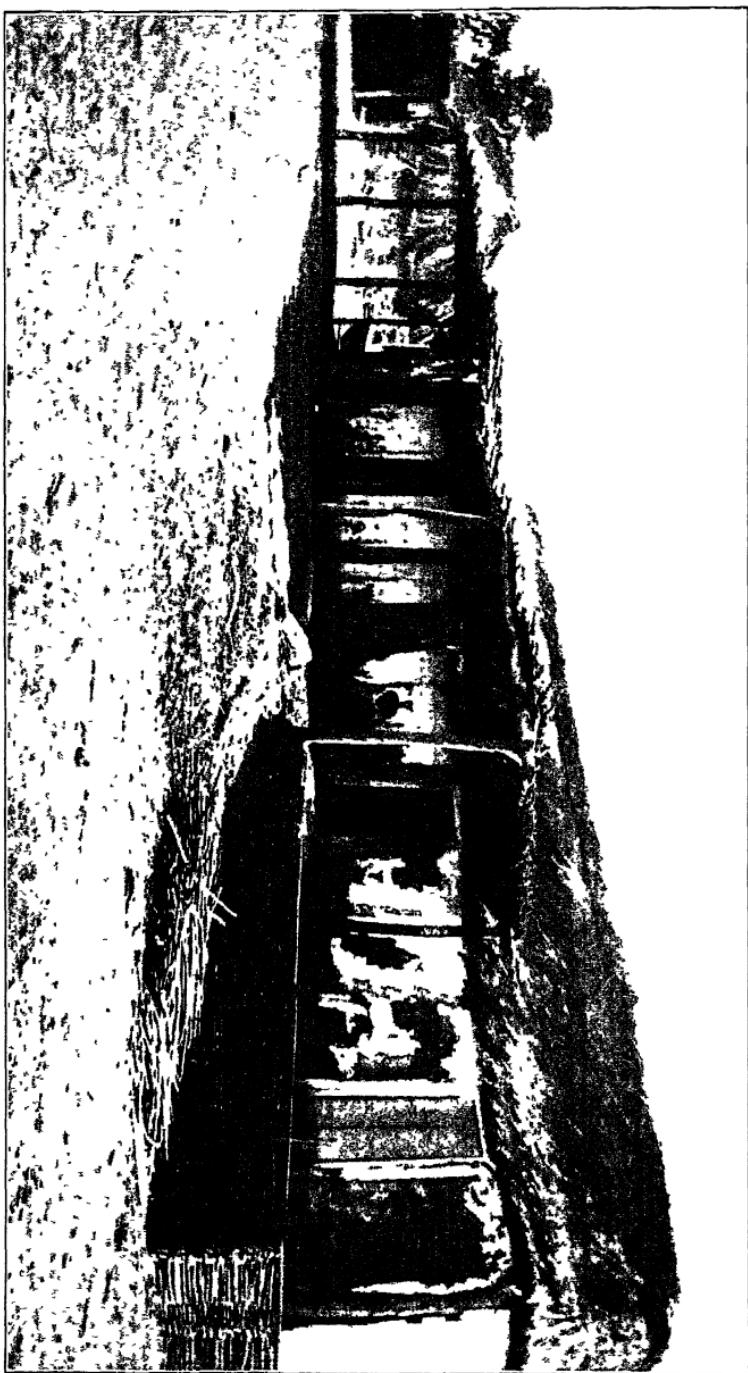
"I've used all I had, sir, and am broke," he answered.
I offered him a peso.

"No," he said positively but politely. "I thank you, but I never take money as a gift. I always earn my own way. I earned enough to keep me going until I reached Culiacan. There a merchant gave me a job, and fitted me out in this suit of clothes and some good underwear, and cash enough to pay my way down here. When I reach Mazatlan I'll get something to do, and I'll get on all right until then."

The following day the *Luella* steamed past Altata without even speaking the port. We could see her in the distance. She had a full cargo and complement of passengers and ignored us wholly. Francisco was with me at the time and was keenly disappointed, as he had hoped for an opportunity to work his passage on her to Mazatlan. When this hope was gone, he disappeared.

Altata is not a good place to tarry in. At the steamship office they assured me that *mañana* the *Alamos*, another of their vessels, would come, and for several days thereafter "*mañana*" was the star of hope that kept my courage up.

There was nothing to do but to pace up and down the beach and enjoy the balmy sea breeze, or lounge on the shady side of the hotel and read and reread the pages of an old newspaper which I was fortunate



The hotel at Altata



The "chambermaid," cook, and waiter, Altata hotel

enough to possess. A single incident occurred to disturb the monotony. I was sitting one afternoon in front of the hotel, chair tipped back, eyes half closed, dreamily contemplating the glimmering white beach, the lazy lapping waves below, a picturesque boatman hoisting anchor and getting under sail, and the distant haze that hovered over the Gulf, when I was startled into activity by the sudden appearance of Ricardo, our waiter boy, shouting excitedly in Spanish to two passing boatmen:

"Come! Come quick! José is killing Enriqueta!"

José, a big, burly fellow who acted as "chambermaid" and general chore man, was usually very inoffensive, and heretofore, I had observed, seemed on very good terms with Enriqueta, the cook. The two men, Ricardo, and myself rushed to the rear bent upon foiling a foul murderer, if we were not already too late. There we found Enriqueta in a corner, and José, fighting drunk, threatening her with instant and horrible death and offering to annihilate Altata and all the surrounding country. We put him down, tied his arms and legs, and laid him in a quiet corner to sleep himself into a milder mood.

But everything has an ending, and one day the *Alamos* actually did arrive, when I had begun to think her a mythical ship of *mañana*. No time was lost in getting aboard, for I half feared that, after all, the *Alamos* might prove to be a phantom vessel and dissolve into thin air. Her decks were very substantial, however, when I found myself upon them. In an hour we were steaming southward, and early the next morning rounded Cerro del Creston and came to anchor in the picturesque harbor of Mazatlan.

CHAPTER XXX

MAZATLAN AND HOMEWARD BOUND

MAZATLAN, with a population of twenty thousand, is not only the largest city in Sinaloa, but the metropolis of Pacific Mexico. There are several hotels here, and one of them, the Hotel Central, whose proprietor learned the art of hotel management in California, is a very comfortable hostelry, perhaps the best west of the Sierra Madres. This I made my domicile during my stay, taking advantage also of the hospitality of the American Club.

The Hotel Central has a bathroom. A bathroom is a luxury in Western Mexico, where ordinary zinc bath tubs cost four hundred dollars, and cast-iron plumbing pipe forty-four cents a foot. This bathroom in the Hotel Central was supplied with both hot and cold water. All of life's pleasures are measured by contrast, and after my enforced residence in Altata, the Hotel Central, with its bath tub, stood out in marked and pleasing contrast to my recent experiences. I revelled in warm suds, followed by a cold spray, and clean, fresh undergarments, then I went to bed for an hour while my only suit of conventional clothes was being pressed.

Normally cleansed and clothed, I paid my respects to Mr. Louis Kaiser, the United States Consul. Mr. Kaiser remembered my former visit and welcomed me

most cordially and heartily. He extended many courtesies to me, placed much valuable data at my disposal, and exerted himself in many ways to make my stay in Mazatlan both pleasant and profitable.

A boom was in progress in Mazatlan at this time, induced by the prospect of early railroad communication with the north. The Cananea, Rio Yaqui, and Pacific Railroad, the extension of the Southern Pacific System before mentioned, had established extensive construction camps some three or four miles back of the town, and these camps drew a large number of Americans,—not only men actually engaged in the work, but also hangers-on and tramps. These latter would not accept employment, and spent their time loafing around saloons, constantly becoming embroiled in fights and other disturbances, to the disgrace of their peaceably inclined fellow-citizens. It was very annoying to be told every day that an "Americano" had been arrested for stealing, or committing some even worse breach of the law. In justice let it be said, however, that every foreigner of this character, no matter what the land of his nativity, was accredited as an American.

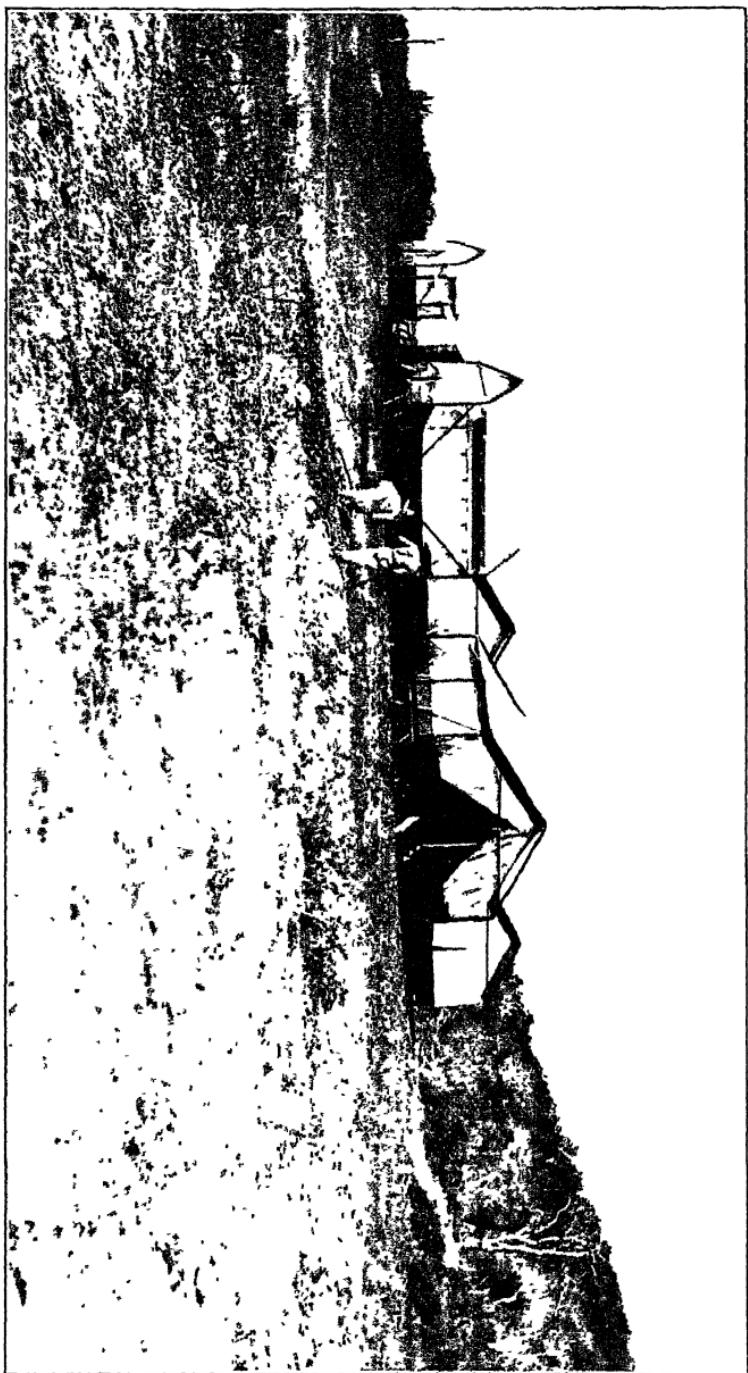
The day following my arrival I visited the camps and introduced myself to Mr. D. E. H. Manigault, the engineer in charge. He received me cordially, entertained me at dinner in the tent where he had established a temporary home, and was good enough to show me over the grounds. The organization was perfect, and the work was being pushed with the utmost energy. Much of the grading had been completed both north and south, and large gangs of native workmen, superintended by Americans, were laying ties

and rails with a rapidity that was marvellous. Many buildings and tents had been erected for the accommodation and comfort of the workmen, one of the tents a well-equipped hospital. The railroad is now, I am informed, in full operation to this point, and to-day one may board a Pullman car in Los Angeles, California, and be set down at Mazatlan without change.

In spite of the city's importance, this is the first railway communication it has ever had. In this connection, perhaps it is worth while to mention an erroneous statement appearing in a voluminous and presumably authoritative work on Mexico, published in 1907, in which the author states: "Mazatlan, in the State of Sinaloa, is more fortunately placed, since there are two lines of railway running from the port into the interior, but neither as yet communicating with the Capital."

There are no such lines of railway here. A survey was once made for a proposed railroad to connect Mazatlan and Durango, but the engineers found the grades too steep to negotiate, and no actual construction work was ever done upon the line.

Unfortunately for Mazatlan, its harbor offers no shelter to shipping, and therefore, during heavy weather, it had sometimes been shut off for considerable periods from sea communication. A plan for building a safe harbor, to cost between six and seven million pesos, has been approved by President Diaz, and it is hoped that the work will be begun shortly. The annual exports from this port to San Francisco alone amount to \$3,000,000 United States gold, and its imports to upwards of \$1,500,000. This does not take into account the large additional coastwise trade.



The field hospital, Mazatlan

A view of Mazatlan



There is an excellent opportunity here for Americans with limited capital to enter into business with profits large and certain. For instance, there is not a retail shoe store in the city, though there is a strong demand for one. Germans at present enjoy a large share of the retail trade.

There is a cigarette factory and a shoe factory in Mazatlan, but practically no other manufacturing of any kind, though the surrounding country presents unusual opportunities for a variety of enterprises. One of many lines that might be entered upon profitably is the canning of food products. Fruits and vegetables might be had at very low cost, labor is cheap, and Europe, if not the United States, offers a ready market. In Tepic Territory, to the south, on the Hacienda San Nicolás, thousands of pineapples go to waste every year because of no present means of utilizing them. The new railroad is to pass through the heart of this rich agricultural region. Those desiring information on the subject should communicate with the American Consul at Mazatlan.

A new sewer system had been established in Mazatlan, and this, together with other sanitary improvements introduced by the authorities, should make the city as healthful as nearly any of our own Southern cities. In 1902 and 1903 the population, then 18,000, was reduced to 4,000 by an epidemic of bubonic plague, and upward of one thousand houses were burned to stay the plague's progress. This, however, was due to unusual circumstances, and it is highly improbable that it will ever be repeated. The new sanitary reforms and a strict, though sometimes illogical, quarantine are sufficient insurance against it.

While I was in Mazatlan an unfortunate shooting incident occurred at the railroad camps. An American foreman of a construction gang discharged two Mexican workmen. The following day the two, more or less under the influence of mescal, returned and attempted to resume work. The foreman ordered them away, and one of them drew his revolver on the foreman, who grappled with the fellow and endeavored to disarm him. The other Mexican at this point took part in the affair, attempting to hold the foreman that the other might use his revolver. An American time-keeper witnessing the struggle ran to his tent, secured a rifle, and shot both Mexicans dead. The timekeeper was languishing in jail when I left, and the Mazatlan papers were endeavoring to create a sentiment against him, and a sympathy for the dead Mexicans, both of them admittedly worthless vagabonds.

The day I visited the construction camps I met, most unexpectedly, my friend Francisco. He had walked a part of the way from Altata, when he overtook the stage-coach stuck fast in a muddy stream. As recompense for assisting the driver to free the vehicle, he was given passage to Mazatlan. I had the satisfaction of learning before I sailed that he had found work at the railroad machine shops.

On the morning of January eighteenth, the Pacific Mail steamship *City of Sydney*, northward bound to San Francisco, came to anchor in the harbor. My work was finished. I bade good-bye to my friends and went aboard, glad to be homeward bound at last, but carrying with me many pleasant memories of the wonderful land of fruits and flowers beyond the Mexican Sierras.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

MEXICO'S UNHUNTED WILDERNESS

IN the course of my mule-back journey of upwards of a thousand miles through the lowland and mountain wilderness of Western Mexico, I was constantly impressed by the manifold attractions that the country holds for sportsmen. With every new trail I traversed these attractions seemingly increased. The lagunas and marshes near the coast were alive with snipe, curlew, and many varieties of wild duck. Ascending the valley of the Rio Santiago huge alligators were seen, basking in the sun on every sandy reach along the river-bank. Coveys of quail rose before us. Deer scampered away as we approached their feeding trysts by the brooksides. Pheasants and wild turkeys fed in the foothills, and in mountain and jungle lurked big game animals, as was evidenced by numerous signs.

I was also impressed by the fact that our sportsmen are rarely if ever seen in this part of Mexico. Why this is so, I cannot say. One reason, possibly, is lack of information as to existing conditions; and many doubtless hesitate upon the erroneous assumption that all Mexico is an unhealthful country sweltering under a tropical sun, and infested by venomous insects and reptiles. The fact is, the average citizen of the United States knows less about Mexico than he does about Africa. I must admit that I had some exceed-

ingly distorted notions of the country and its government before I visited it, and many preconceived opinions to revise.

To the sportsman who can spare but a few weeks each year in which to seek relief in the wilderness, the ideal hunting-ground possesses six prime characteristics. First, it must be well stocked with a variety of game; second, a secluded section shut out so far as possible from civilization and the haunts of other hunters; third, a place easily accessible and quickly reached; fourth, it should be set in impressive and varied scenery; fifth, a climate suited to individual taste; sixth, not too expensive in point of guides, transportation, and incidentals. This refers to the general sportsman, and not to him who wishes to secure some particular species to add to his trophies. The latter must be willing to make sacrifice.

It is necessary here to emphasize the fact that Mexico is a big country. We Americans have a way of looking upon it as just a little patch tagged onto Texas. It is very much larger than Alaska, and a quarter as large as the whole United States.

It may be said that every species of game animal found on the North American Continent south of the fiftieth parallel of north latitude, except moose, caribou, and elk, is found here. The silver-tip bear ranges all through the high Sierra Madres, wherever there is a good feeding-ground; and wherever there are grizzlies, one may expect also the huge cinnamon bear, the grizzly's close neighbor. The common brown bear is not so numerous, but the black bear is quite plentiful. The white-faced bear is more rare, though it is sometimes found in the coastal mountains.

I could not learn that this species had ever been seen in the Sierras Madres.

The higher mountains at all elevations, and even the lower foothills, abound with white-tail deer. On the Pacific side they are numerous almost to the coast. I saw them just outside the city of Culiacan. They are very plentiful in Tepic Territory, and I can vouch from personal experience for the quality of their venison. At many mountain cabins where I stopped they were household pets, having been taken as fawns and raised by the children. The mule, burro, or black-tail inhabits portions of the States of Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Sonora; and in this section are found also mountain sheep.

The mountain lion lurks in all the high country, and along with him is sometimes found, but more seldom killed, the American panther. All the American great cats, in fact, inhabit both the Pacific and Gulf coasts and foothills. The small American leopard is very numerous all along the hot country coasts; and the Mexican jaguar, known locally by foreigners as the tiger, preys upon cattle and ranch animals to such a degree as to be very much of a nuisance. Riding one day on the Hacienda San Nicolás, in Tepic Territory, with Serapio, the head mozo, an Americanized Mexican, I remarked a mule without ears.

"How did the mule lose his ears, Serapio?" I asked.

"Th' tiger he get-a th' ear," answered Serapio. "Sometime he get-a th' mule, he get-a th' calf, he get-a th' pig. He damn bad! He too damn many!"

There are some timber wolves, but they are not dangerous. The one animal that really is dangerous

is the *javalin*, or Mexican wild boar. They run in large bands, and will kill both man and horse. If one of them is wounded, the whole band will turn upon the hunter, and woe to him if he has not provided for escape or safety! The *javalin* is very numerous in some sections, but if not molested is not likely to attack.

The noblest game bird of the world, the wild turkey, is plentiful throughout the Sierra Madres wherever its food is to be found, which is nearly everywhere, and grows to immense size. Grouse and pheasants inhabit the foothills in considerable abundance. The small valley quail, the fool quail, and the large mountain quail are common. I saw a few wild pigeons, and was told that at times there were a good many of them.

It was my good fortune, while at Mazatlan, to accompany Mr. J. Cadman, an American sportsman who was temporarily residing there, upon a half-day's hunting trip for duck and snipe. This was on January fourteen — mid-winter — with the delightful weather characteristic of the climate at this season, — clear and fine and not so warm as to make walking uncomfortable.

On the outskirts of the town we engaged three native boys to act as retrievers, and a half-hour's moderate walking brought us to the game ground. This was a wide, flat country, interspersed with marshes and small ponds, and an ideal feeding-place, where wild rice, celery, and fine grass grew in abundance. Mr. Cadman had promised to show me the greatest variety and quantity of birds I had ever seen in an equal area. My expectations ran high, and I was not disappointed. Everywhere were ducks and ducks and ducks, curlew, snipe, and rails.

I was armed with a camera, while Cadman carried a double-barrelled shotgun. No bird was fired upon until it took to the wing. When game was brought down, our human retrievers, stripped naked, recovered it, plunging into the ponds like well-trained dogs, save in three or four instances where alligators, they alleged, lay in waiting for such delicate morsels as Mexican youngsters, and in these cases we lost our birds. Ours was rather a seeing than a shooting tour, and no attempt was made to kill beyond specimens of different varieties. We were absent from the American Consulate about three hours, and our bag totalled the following ducks: two blue-bells, two spoon-bills, two mallards, one green-winged teal, and one blue-winged teal. In addition to these we secured some jacksnipe, curlew, and Virginia rail. I mention this incident merely to show the sporting possibilities of the neighborhood.

Mr. Cadman informed me that in the course of his hunting expeditions over this ground he had found the following varieties of water fowl and other game birds: green-wing teal, blue-wing teal, sprig, widgeon, red-head, mallard, blue-bell, gray curlew, black curlew, plover, sand snipe, three varieties of quail, pigeons in large numbers, and not far from Mazatlan wild turkeys and grouse. "I was much surprised," said he, "to find upon investigation several ideal spots for Wilson or jacksnipe, and to find the birds in large numbers."

It may be said that Mr. Cadman was at that time, and probably is to-day, the only sportsman hunting in this locality. Natives rarely hunt anywhere in Mexico, save in the vicinity of Mexico City where I

found them with batteries of guns set up, slaughtering ducks by the thousand for market; and near some of the other larger eastern cities which offered good markets for game.

What I have said about game birds round about Mazatlan applies to all the Pacific lowland coast. In the lagunas near Mexcaltatan, between San Blas and Mazatlan, I saw myriads and myriads of ducks and other water fowl. Shots from our revolvers started numberless flocks of them. I was told that later in the season wild geese were very plentiful, but personally I saw none.

All of the rivers and creeks of Southern Sinaloa and Tepic are well stocked with alligators. I was assured that there were crocodiles also in the Rio Santiago, but saw none of these myself, and cannot vouch for the statement.

From Mr. Boon Barker, representing the National Lines Railroad at Tepehuanes, I obtained much valuable information. Mr. Barker is an enthusiastic hunter and thorough sportsman. He has lived in Mexico for many years, and his experience extends over a wide range of country, from the northwestern United States to middle-southern Mexico. He has killed nearly every species of animal known in this vast territory. As adept in woodcraft and animal lore as an Indian, he never uses dogs or guides, but pits his own skill against that of the animal he hunts. Naturally our conversation turned to the subject, and the best localities in which to find the various species of game in Mexico.

"It is a mystery to me," said he, "why our people of the East do not occasionally vary their hunting

trips by coming to the Sierra Madres, instead of going repeatedly, year after year, to Canada or the north-western United States. But they rarely do. The fact is that this whole range of mountains, hundreds of miles in length, is practically never visited by hunters, in spite of the fact that it abounds in a great variety of game. Why, almost anywhere one can reach, within a few hours of the railroad, mountain fastnesses that have never been trod by man, where deer abound, and where the hunter is pretty sure to get bear, and has a good chance at other big game, besides as many turkeys as he wants. He may pitch his tent at altitudes ranging from five to ten thousand feet in solitudes where none will disturb him, free during the winter months from mosquitoes, flies, and all kinds of pests, with plenty of the purest, coldest water, an abundance of wood, and a perfect climate. There is temperature to suit any fancy. At eight or ten thousand feet the air is delightfully cool in August and September, while in October and November frost comes, and sometimes snow. October and November are the best hunting months, for then the game is in prime condition, turkeys well matured, and bear still abroad.

"Hardly a week passes," he continued, "that I do not go out with my rifle. My hunting in Mexico has been confined to the States of Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Durango, Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Sonora. During the last fifteen years I have hunted over them almost constantly, and can speak of my own certain knowledge in reference to them. They are all of them filled with game, but I would suggest for prospective hunters the country west of Durango City. Animals

and men can be hired there, and outfits purchased, and ten to fifteen hours on mule-back from Durango will take the hunters into a splendid country for a great variety of big game. I would like to see some of our sportsmen come down. They would come again. It would be not only a hunting trip, but afford an opportunity to see some of the wildest and most picturesque country on the continent.

"It is inexpensive hunting in Mexico. There is no license to pay, and men and animals can be hired at almost any place at fifty cents gold for each per day. You may say that I shall be very glad to answer sportmen's letters respecting the country, and advise them as to outfitting and hunting localities. I'm keen on the sport myself, and you know we're a sort of fraternity."*

The one trophy that Mr. Barker has failed to secure is the mountain lion. "I've sat for many hours at a stretch on different occasions," said he, "to watch for a mountain lion to return for the carcass of a deer it had pulled down, but always failed."

Mr. Barker learned to hunt with our Western Indians, spending his youth and early manhood among them. His long and continued experience, coupled with the fact that throughout his life he has been a close student of the habits of animals and ways of the wilderness, make him an unusually expert hunter. If he cannot, therefore, get the mountain lion without dogs, no ordinary sportsman could hope to do so. I would, therefore, suggest that those desiring to secure mountain lion or the jaguar, or even to make a certainty of getting the larger bears, take dogs. In most cases these can

* Address Mr. Boon Barker, Tepehuanes, Durango, Mexico.

be had, through the men employed, at a nominal cost, if any charge at all is made.

Mr. Caryl Davis Haskins, a well-known business man and sportsman of New York State, has made several very satisfactory hunting trips into the Sierra Madres west of the town of Casas Grandes, Chihuahua, extending his expeditions across the State line into Sonora. His statements, like those of Mr. Barker, may be absolutely relied upon, and I quote from a letter which he wrote me descriptive of this section:

"The mountains here range from seven to nine thousand feet, and are extremely broken and difficult; fairly well timbered, considering the region, with water sufficiently plentiful, which is not the case on the tableland at the foot of the immediate mountains.

"The game is very plentiful, from the food standpoint, especially deer. You can shoot all the deer that you want or need at any time. They are not our deer, but the Arizona dwarf deer, the rarest of the American *Cervidae*. A good buck will not weigh more than about seventy-five or eighty pounds.

"The peccary, or javalin, is numerous, but you do not see specimens often. They run in large bands, and I think are the most dangerous of American game. If you see one you will see a great many, but I have never yet seen one, although I have found their tracks plentifully.

"Bear, both silver-tip and cinnamon, are reasonably plentiful, but except by accident are impossible to get at unless you have dogs. You see their tracks, however, in great numbers.

"The puma is also very common, and the jaguar occurs, but not plentifully. I have, however, seen their tracks. There are three other cats, the Mexican spotted lynx, a little long-tailed tree cat, and a very small grass cat, neither of which latter are you likely to see. However, I do not think they are rare. The Mexican fox is quite common,

the raccoon is common, and turkeys are plentiful. Two varieties of quail are plentiful, and a little south of where I was there are considerable numbers of wild cattle which have probably existed in the wild state in these mountains for not less than one hundred years.

"This is about all, except for an occasional timber wolf, and an occasional prairie wolf strayed up into the timber. There are also otter in the streams, and a few duck. All the larger mountain streams have trout, but not plentifully."

Generally speaking, Mexico does not offer many good trout brooks. In the State of Durango there are one or two, and on the trail between Mazatlan and Durango City there is one said to contain a new species of trout. The sportsman cannot, however, hope for much in this direction. Of the many mountain streams that I crossed and visited I found trout in but one, and not many of them there. But along the coast there is excellent sport to be had with the rod. The sea waters swarm with fish.

What I have said, I trust will be sufficient to give an insight into the character of Mexican hunting-grounds, and in a general way prove a guide to some of the best and most available localities.

It would be difficult to imagine a country offering so many varieties of climate within a few miles' space as Mexico. Rising gently from the sea, a comparatively level strip of land averaging about eighty miles in breadth lies between the Pacific Ocean and the western wall of the Sierra Madres, where the mountains tower in abrupt and awe-inspiring grandeur. Along the sea are the marshes and the lagunas, above is the jungle, quickly giving way to a less verdant growth. Everywhere here are flowers, song birds, and brilliant-hued parrots and parrakeets — a wonder-

ful world of color, sweet perfumes, and unfamiliar things.

In this narrow strip it is naturally exceedingly warm during the summer period, which is also the rainy season; but as one approaches the Tropic of Cancer the temperature becomes more bearable. At Mazatlan and northward from November to April the nights are not oppressive. Throughout mid-winter the days are delightful and balmy, and a blanket is needed on the bed at night. At Culiacan, during eight months of the year one finds an almost ideal climate.

With the rise into the mountains a rapid and marked change takes place both in the flora and the temperature. Tropical plants and trees give way to those of the temperate zone, until finally the great primordial forest of pine is reached, stretching away in limitless boundaries over the peaks. Here, at varying altitudes of from six thousand to eleven thousand feet, the air, laden with the scent of pine needles, is cool and invigorating. Crisp hoar frost crackles under one's feet on winter mornings, and now and again snow falls to a depth of several inches. Mighty canyons, rushing streams, spray-enveloped cataracts whose floods fall into unknown depths, towering peaks, fantastic rock formations — scenery beyond compare — are characteristic, but never grow commonplace.

Continuing over the mountains to the eastward, one reaches the elevated plateau with its wide stretches of arid and semi-arid land, but with a temperate and all but perfect climate.

All this variety may be experienced within a week on mule-back. Indeed, a few hours will carry one from one extreme to the other. My journey from Culiacan

carried me through all the changes, and over some of the wildest and most picturesque country in the world. Normally this is a five days' trip, but in November I encountered snow in the higher altitudes, my guide lost the trail in the forest, and I was somewhat delayed.

The best season for Northern sportsmen to visit the country is early autumn and winter — any time after September fifteenth for the high altitudes, and after the first of November in the low country. Such a visit would be a revelation to wilderness lovers, and would be worth considerable sacrifice.

Sonora is the only State in the Republic that restricts the importation of firearms. These restrictions were established during the Yaqui insurrection, to prevent the Indians securing weapons. Other States permit sportsmen to bring in one rifle and one hundred rounds of ammunition free of duty, and no question is raised as to revolvers. In fact, it is the fashion, outside of the towns, in all remote districts, for the traveller to wear a belt of cartridges and a gun, or so it was wherever I travelled.

There are no game laws, and no restrictions of any sort are laid upon either season or kind of game killed. I say this in the confidence that no sportsman will overstep the unwritten law of the woods, which prohibits the killing of does, mother birds in the brooding season, or a greater number of any animal than can be utilized without waste. The true gentleman of the wilderness will need no warning; but should there still be living one of the "game hog" class, I would say a word for his benefit. The old saying, "Murder will out," applies to-day to the remotest wilderness, and excessive slaughter of game will surely be found

out, and the trespasser as surely punished by the contempt of sportsmen and by exclusion from association with them. Sometime ago an American resident of Durango City went into the mountains camping with a party consisting of his family and a lady visitor, and in one day slaughtered sixteen deer. He was so proud of his achievement that he wrote of it to the editor of one of our New York sporting monthlies. The editor published the letter, and appended some caustic remarks. When the American read these remarks he saw himself in a new light, and wrote another letter to the magazine in which he stated there were eight in his party, and that the sixteen deer represented the hunt of the whole party. I talked with the lady guest, and she assured me the eight members of the party consisted of the American, his wife and three small children, herself, and two mozos. The American did actually kill the sixteen deer himself, and only parts of two of the animals were utilized, the remainder going to feed the vultures.

There is no longer danger from brigands, which have been stamped out very effectually by the Government. Foreigners are welcomed, and visitors are treated with courtesy and consideration.

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